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Nuclear Reaction

The Rape of Progress by Robert Nisbet

The Impact of Three Mile Island
by Mark A. Schulman

Living Dangerously . . .
Sometimes
by Gene Pokorny

latest data on nuclear energy
and gasoline shortages

plus

Modern Marketing Techniques: They Could Work in Washington, Too by Irving Crespi
As the World Turns . . . Right? A Conversation with Howard R. Penniman and Richard M. Scammon
Uncle Jim and the Iron Lady by Ben J. Wattenberg
The Mistress of Downing Street, Why She Won by William Schneider

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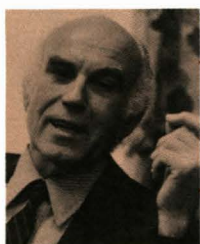
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The Rape of Progress

I

Will the idea of progress survive the 20th century in America? Events surrounding the nuclear accident in Pennsylvania this spring have once again raised that question in sharp relief, for it is now apparent that the consequences of the accident are much more than technological in nature. Three Mile Island has already become an ideological battle cry, giving powerful stimulus to moral and political opposition to nuclear power in any form—and indeed, to the idea of progress itself.

Nuclear protesters have been in our midst for years, of course, but Three Mile Island sent thousands of others into the streets for the first time since Vietnam. The May 6th rally in Washington, though hastily organized, drew crowds of at least 65,000 and perhaps a good many more. Public television, for reasons that remain shrouded in uncertainty, devoted generous hours of airtime to the proceedings, and the *Village Voice* recorded the protest under a bold, front page headline entitled, "Carter's Vietnam." The Movement, it seems, is alive once more, and without much doubt the campaign against nuclear power plants will broaden and intensify during the months ahead. The extraordinary coincidence of the release of the movie *The China Syndrome*—its themes, the perils and horrors latent in reactor plants and the venality of those controlling them—and then, almost immediately after, the accident itself has given and will continue to give Three Mile Island an ominous cast in the minds of many intellectuals, and, of course, that part of the public sensitive to the press and electronic media.

The technical and economic aspects of the accident are serious enough. With the shutting down of other plants, the costs to electric power consumers will be huge. As the *Wall Street Journal* reported in late

April: "Talks with officials . . . in the nuclear industry and with their critics indicate that the Harrisburg accident will add billions of dollars to the nuclear-generating costs that already are vastly higher than imagined in the industry's pioneer days."

In the same issue of the *Journal*, Suzanne Weaver writes in a column: "In the wake of the accident at Three Mile Island, it has become clear that the country's future energy choices are going to be heavily influenced and perhaps dominated by issues of safety and risk. A controversy now brewing among 'risk assessment' specialists suggests that unless the climate of discussion changes, the debates on these issues are going to be bitter, confusing to the public and less useful than they could be in helping us make policy."

Whether intended or not, the extraordinary attention that the press and electronic media gave to the events at Three Mile Island almost inevitably contributed to the bitterness and confusion noted by Suzanne Weaver. Two scholars in the field, William Allen and Michael Robinson, have provided preliminary estimates that almost 40 percent of all news time (network evening news) in the week following the disaster was given to Three Mile Island. Watching the network news each breathless night, it was as though an army, well trained and fully indoctrinated, had been poised for weeks, waiting for the proper incident to activate it. It is difficult if not impossible to account for the comprehensiveness, the duration and the intensity of the media response to Three Mile Island apart from ideological considerations.

Let us bear in mind that the safety record of the nuclear generating plants over their twenty-year history has been impressive. No known accident has occurred during the two decades which has resulted in loss of life or serious injury or illness. Compared to the

safety record of coal mines, that of nuclear power is astonishing.

Even on Three Mile Island, it is important to keep clearly in mind that there were no deaths and no detectable emanations of radioactivity which would have, so far as we know, left any aftermath of widespread ailments. The accident itself was the result of what has been called by technically qualified judges a wildly improbable combination of errors, some human. The plant's safety system did work. Although children and pregnant women were advised to stay clear of the immediate area, there were no evacuations. Nor was there much if any evidence of alarm, much less panic, on the part of local inhabitants. Jack Richardson, writing in the April 16th edition of *New York* magazine, tells us:

"The last reports when I left New York had been ominous. Headlines proclaimed that scientists at the plant were 'baffled' and in a race with disaster; people were fleeing the Harrisburg area by the thousands; those who remained had been ordered to stay indoors; curfews had been imposed to prevent looting; a mysterious bubble had formed inside the reactor core and was threatening to explode.

Richardson arrived at Harrisburg expecting all forms and degrees of panic—roads clogged with cars, police and soldiers everywhere, Geiger counters out by the thousands.

"What greeted me, however, were quiet downtown streets and people on them who seemed determined to behave undramatically. They were perplexed, of course, by the nearby danger, but when I asked them dark leading questions about malevolent particles and fuel rods, they treated me as someone naive in the ways of catastrophes.

"'You don't think we're going to pack just because Walter Cronkite uses some big words and looks gloomy, do you?', a taxi driver told me. And lectured a shoe salesman: 'That plant out there is one of the facts of the 20th century. And most people here have learned to face facts.'"

When President Carter visited the reactor plant, he was, officials pointed out, exposed to less radioactivity than he would have been in the dentist's chair undergoing X-rays. It is no secret that the President was also furious about the intensity and tone of the media coverage. The American people at large, in contrast to the media, were remarkably contained, even those with nuclear reactors near their homes. In a poll taken just after the crisis, a majority indicated their continued faith in nuclear power plants. As for those who added, "but not in my backyard," the remark could as easily apply to slaughter houses, rubber factories, and punk rock bands. Even Joan Claybrook, product of the Ralph Nader movement, now head of the National Highway Administration, addressing a press conference on the truly appalling increase in highway deaths each year, took pains to observe that more people were killed on the roads last year alone

than would have died in and around Harrisburg had there been a full meltdown with consequent release of radioactive gases (always highly unlikely, anyway). Add to highway deaths those of air accidents of the last few years, not to forget the evacuations and other results of periodic derailments of trains carrying highly toxic chemicals. There has never been a risk-free environment for human beings, and if modern technology has created certain risks, it has also removed a great many which plagued mankind for thousands of years.

Why, then, the disproportion between what actually happened on Three Mile Island and the immense, detailed and prolonged coverage given it by the media? Why was the derailment of a chlorine train in Florida the following weekend, with necessary evacuation of more than 5,000 people—and the consequences to health and environment that are not yet known—given almost no attention by press and television? And why, coming back to nuclear power, was the reaction by the media to *The Progressive* and its articles on the manufacture of nuclear bombs one of indignation toward the government for seeking to prevent publication of the article rather than some degree of horror at the prospect of such an article appearing at all, given the numbers of nations not now in possession of nuclear weapons?

To answer these and other questions about nuclear power and media fascination with its potential for doomsday, we are obliged to leave Three Mile Island, and indeed all other existing nuclear plants, and go to the currents of ideological opposition to nuclear energy which have been building up ever since World War II. We are equally obliged, as I shall discuss in the final part of this article, to take cognizance of ideological opposition to technology and science generally in our time.

II

Probably the only time atomic power was without enemies was during the brief period prior to German surrender in 1945 when the atom bomb was an accomplished fact. Nothing I have seen in the vast literature on the Manhattan District written during the last few decades suggests that any dissent whatever existed within the project so far as use of the bomb on Nazi Germany was concerned. Surrender of the Germans made such use unnecessary. There was, however, still Japan to conquer, and the question was immediately presented: Should the atom bomb, designed primarily for use against Germany, be used on the Japanese nation? A number of works, among them Dean Acheson's *Present at the Creation*, attest to the serious opposition, from scientists as well as political leaders, to use of the bomb on the Japanese. It was President Truman, of course, who, despite this opposition, gave the orders resulting in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Japan's surrender was almost immediate.

But this, then concealed opposition, was but the

tiny beginning of something that has grown constantly larger among scientists and other intellectuals. There was the opposition in the late 1940s to development of the hydrogen or "fusion" bomb led by the late J. Robert Oppenheimer, one of the central figures in the creation of the atom bomb of 1945, an opposition once again overruled by President Truman. Nor can we easily forget the strong resistance mounted against nuclear bomb testing in the late 1940s and 1950s.

Then, though, even and especially among opponents of the bomb and its testing, there was wide support for development of peaceful uses of nuclear energy, for a "clean" source of industrial power. We need only "harness" the atom, it was said, and mankind will at last be liberated from bondage to wood, coal, and oil and all their pollutants. What is now being widely claimed for solar energy by Barry Commoner and others was then being claimed for nuclear energy. For a time at least, nuclear power in industry was "in," acceptable to artists, writers and scientists, and thus to press and television.

But that time is plainly gone. I suppose its passing could have been predicted by those of us familiar with the reactions of writers and artists toward coal and oil during the past two centuries in the West. It was the poet Blake who saw the new, mechanized forms of industry in the early 19th century as "dark Satanic mills." From all available evidence the people at large were fascinated by these mills, seeing in them not only mass production of goods which were affordable, but also emancipation from the backbreaking work that had throughout time been inseparable from production. But for Blake and then Carlyle, Matthew Arnold, Ruskin, and innumerable other intellectuals, industrialism was, despite manifest popularity among the people generally, an affront to esthetic and moral criteria.

Opposition to nuclear reactor plants today—largely instigated by much the same kinds of groups which flourished earlier in their assaults on coal and oil—has been growing at ever higher rates and will almost certainly continue to grow. Never mind that on the evidence of the great majority of qualified engineers and other scientists, our economy cannot grow or even maintain present levels of production apart from nuclear energy. Never mind that during the last two or three decades, the safety record of nuclear reactor plants has been outstanding—perfect indeed by contrast with the records of coal and oil. Never mind that a very recent Department of Energy study has shown that radioactive nuclear wastes can be stored more safely than such non-nuclear and highly toxic wastes as barium, arsenic and chlorine. And never mind, finally, that millirems of radiation are inescapable as long as we live on this planet, that they increase with altitude, and that there were fewer millirems of radioactivity present at the Three Mile Island accident than there are any day of the year at, say, Denver, Colorado or, even more, at jet-flight altitudes. The assault on nuclear

energy will continue, will broaden and intensify, irrespective of these considerations of fact. So far, at least, the evidence shows that the general public still favors nuclear development, but it is certainly not immune to the barrage of criticism that has been heaped on the nuclear industry.

Perhaps Leon Festinger's theory of cognitive dissonance is explanatory in some degree of this intellectual assault. Just as the faith of the 19th century Millerites in New York State was unaffected by failure of the cosmic flood (and then Christ) to appear in the long-awaited year of 1843, or in the promptly predicted succeeding year, so in our day anti-nuclear faith is undiminished and even enhanced by continuing records of safety in the nuclear reactor plants. Such faith in doomsday must have been as titillated by first reports on Three Mile Island as would have been the faith of Millerites had they watched, from their hilltop perches, heavy rains falling and the flooding of houses during the last week of 1843.

At least one kind of damage was done through the accident on Three Mile Island. Two Duke University scientists, William D. Walker, physicist, and Constance K. Walker, nuclear chemist, have described it eloquently in a letter to the *Wall Street Journal*:

"If suits for damages are to be made it seems that the news media need to be the defendants in at least some of them. The main damage that was done to people around the plant was psychological, not physical. The fear and anxiety experienced was a direct result of the 'sensationalism' of the reporting. Faced with a highly confused situation, journalists deliberately chose to present the most pessimistic views in the most dramatic language, thereby creating fear in the minds of the public. The situation was an accident and was bad, but it was certainly not a 'disaster' nor did it even come close to being one."

III

As I noted above, current assaults on nuclear power have to be seen in the context of a two-century history of such assaults on any and all forms of power necessary to the industrialism that, while liked by the workers and consumers, was from the beginning the object of indictment by writers, artists and many philosophers—though *not*, be it remembered, by such progress-intoxicated prophets as Saint-Simon, Comte, and Karl Marx.

I can think of no intellectual change that has come over America in the latter part of the 20th century that is more pregnant with institutional and material consequence than the almost complete disappearance—among intellectuals, not yet perhaps the majority of the people—of faith in progress. It is often said that the idea of progress died with the 19th century, or with the First World War, or with the Depression. Nonsense. The idea was alive and kicking all through the Depres-

sion. Throughout its long history, the idea thrived during periods of deprivation, war, and despotism. Think of what our forefathers put up with during the 19th century in the way of financial panics, war (including the agonizing, bloody Civil War), unemployment, frontier deprivations and dangers, and the ever-present realities of crippling disease and disabling hunger among the masses. But progress was quite literally America's religion during this century, and it remained so through World War II.

What the idea of progress (or any major idea, for that matter) *cannot* stand, however, is the loss, or perceived loss, of its premises. High among all the premises of this idea, from the Greeks down through the first part of the 20th century in the West, are first, belief in the value of economic growth and prosperity; second, confidence in the powers of reason, particularly as manifested in the practical arts and sciences; and third, acceptance of material advancement as one of the signs of intellectual and moral advancement. The last premise will seem grotesque to some, given the number of religious prophets in history for whom riches in any degree were potential barriers to salvation, but whether we are dealing with the Greeks and Romans, the 13th century Christians, the Puritans, the key figures of the Enlightenment, or the major philosophers of progress during the last century or two, rise in man's material estate on earth was deemed not merely compatible with but necessary to the instruction and elevation of his mind.

What even a Plato most often used as evidences of the gradual advancement of mankind over vast periods of time were essentially economic: the practical arts of agriculture, metallurgy, and architecture. Not until mankind had achieved a due proportion of these, declared Plato—and his numberless successors in the history of the idea of progress—was it possible for groups and classes of individuals to rise whose vocation was the achievement of spiritual and moral wisdom. In sum, there is a close and reciprocal relation between perceptions of prosperity, economic and other, already gained, and faith in human progress—past, present and future.

What is so striking about this last quarter of the 20th century in America and in the West generally is the near-disappearance (again, be it emphasized, I am dealing here with intellectuals, not the population at large) of faith in the three premises and, hence, in human progress. It is more than mere disenchantment. Compounded with moral condemnation of such growth is widening fear that the resources of growth are fast-vanishing: above all energy resources. That there is nothing substantively compelling to justify such fear, given vast still-untapped sources of energy, does not affect the matter. The appeal of what John Stuart Mill referred to as "the stationary state" widens steadily at the present time, no matter what the nomenclature may be.

Books foretelling the baneful consequences of economic growth greatly outnumber in our bookstores and public libraries those with opposite message. Think only of the broad and enthusiastic reception received by E. J. Mishan's *The Costs of Economic Growth* and Fred Hirsch's *Social Limits of Growth*. As for faith in the powers of reason and science, it assuredly continues to exist, but there is no evidence that it is growing or spreading. Quite the contrary. We need but look out on the pullulating ranks of the irrationalists (there are three times as many astrologers in Europe and the United States today as chemists and physicists, to offer but one instance) for whom reason and science are the enemy of the good life. And when so eminent a molecular biologist as Gunther Stent writes, as he did a decade ago, a book with the title: *The Coming of the Golden Age: A View of the End of Progress*, its basic argument the incapacity of science any longer to improve the human lot, leading to Stent's conclusion (first suggested, he tells us, by observation of San Francisco's serene beats and hippies) that reversion to a Polynesian paradise free of all technology and science is the highest hope for mankind, we had better begin to wonder seriously what age approacheth.

Professor Stent may be, surely is, in the minority among scientists, but he is far from alone. A recent entire issue of *Daedalus* was devoted precisely to the limits of science and to what the respected Robert Morison refers to as "the new anxiety." This anxiety is multi-fold, encompassing the question of whether the final significant limits of science have not already been reached, with only diminishing returns to be expected henceforth; whether technology as developed has done more harm than good to human beings; whether proliferation of nuclear reactor plants and of researchers and experiments in genetic engineering and of efforts to effect climatological changes will not bring disaster rather than advancement to the human race. Not to be overlooked either is that vein of social and moral prophecy with roots in certain 19th century philosophies which has grown steadily in our time, especially among the counterculture, which suggests that the spirit of man is being crushed by technology and science.

We are fortunate that thus far such "anxiety" seems not to have touched the vast majority of Americans. They continue to believe in the salutary effects of science and technology, of economic growth, and the importance of a rising standard of living in the material sphere. If Governor Thornburgh really believes what he stated after the Three Mile Island accident, that nuclear energy is "the worst fear of modern man," he had better authorize a public opinion poll. It is without doubt the worst fear of some people including some scientists, but it would be easy to catalogue fears—among them double-digit inflation, joblessness, and American impotence in the world of nations, to name but three—which come well ahead of nuclear energy in the minds of most Americans.

Some 95 percent of American physical scientists are said to realize the necessity of nuclear energy in American society at the present time. A Canadian physicist, consultant to Canada's Atomic Energy Control Board, has assessed the risks attendant upon use of all existent or foreseeable sources of energy: everything from coal and oil to wind, solar, and nuclear forms. His report—admittedly controversial—that except only for natural gas, nuclear energy involves fewer risks than any other known form—coal, oil, wind and solar, be it noted—has been savaged beyond belief by scientists who have long since given themselves to the cult of the anti-nuclear. As I conclude this essay, a report of the National Academy of Sciences has been released on the possible risks of nuclear power in industry. According to the *Christian Science Monitor* (April 30), "The NAS researchers feel there has been undue emphasis on the number of immediate fatalities which might result from a nuclear accident." The report further concludes that although the literature is meager on long-term effects, "the number of total casualties in future generations is likely to be only a fraction of what it would in the present generation for any given accident." What we learn also in the report is that based on the generating capacity estimated for the year 2000, between 165 and 255 cancer deaths would be added as the result of exposure to nuclear energy (at present the annual cancer fatality rate in the U.S. is 360,000). Production of an equivalent amount of elec-

tricity with coal, the report estimates, "would result in an estimated 3,000-plus deaths."

Such estimates by scientists, along with the actual, extraordinary record over two decades of nuclear reactor plants, should be, in my judgment, clinching evidence for the continued development of nuclear domestic energy, evidence that under ordinary circumstances would triumph. But, as I have indicated above, ordinary circumstances don't exist.

There is still another context, a very contemporary one, in which the fight against nuclear energy with its unmatched record of safety has to be seen. Probably the best single word to epitomize this context is "environmentalism." For, however diverse and often contradictory the strands of ideology making up the context I now refer to, the commonest and holiest justification is our natural environment.

In his highly illuminating, just published, *The Environmental Protection Hustle* (M.I.T. Press), Bernard J. Frieden, professor of urban studies at MIT, has shown, with detailed documentation, the extent to which current, crusading environmentalism is directed not only at economic growth, but at the poor, the minorities, the young—all those, in short, who aspire to life in the suburbs, who have a reasonable chance of getting there in time, but who are being blocked and frustrated by the particular kind of environmentalism

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by Mark A. Schulman

THE IMPACT OF THREE MILE ISLAND

The major story to emerge from Three Mile Island—at least for now—may well be what *didn't* happen.

In the tense days just after the accident, there were mushrooming doubts about the future of nuclear power in the United States. Many thought that the public would turn harshly against it, demanding that plants be closed down. At the very least, people might insist on a moratorium on the construction of new plants.

Early soundings of the public tended, in fact, to confirm these suspicions. Two weeks after the accident, for example, a survey conducted jointly by ABC News and Louis Harris and Associates found the public at a virtual standoff when asked about the construction of new power plants: 47 percent in favor, 45 percent opposed. Those numbers represented a dramatic shift from Harris findings in October 1978, when people supported new construction by an overwhelming 2-1 margin. Moreover, as the troubled reactor eased to a shutdown in Pennsylvania, almost seven in ten Americans (68 percent) rejected the contention that the accident resulted from an unusual series of events unlikely to happen again. To two-thirds of the population, then, it was conceivable that Three Mile Island was but a precursor of the future.

The early polls brought a rush to judgment on other fronts as well. One major newspaper reported to its readers that several years ago, the public had been willing to have nuclear power plants in their communities but now that mood had changed, so that only 38 percent were willing to have plants in their backyards and 56 percent were opposed. The newspaper concluded that the shift was “apparently as a result of the accident at the Three Mile Island nuclear power plant.”

The Public's Message to Washington

Is nuclear power thus doomed in the court of public opinion? Perhaps that will one day be the case, but for the moment, a closer examination suggests that a

majority of Americans still believe the country needs more, not less, nuclear power. While people were shaken by Three Mile Island—41 percent told Harris interviewers they were “deeply disturbed” by the accident—large majorities want to continue nuclear power:

- By 80-15 percent, according to an ABC News/Harris survey of April 6-9, 1979 (2 weeks after the accident), Americans reject the idea of a “permanent shut-down” of all nuclear power plants.

- By 57-40 percent, they disapprove shutting down all nuclear power plants until the “government knows more about the safety risks.”

- And by 71-26 percent, the public still wants to allow construction of nuclear power plants now being planned with the proviso that the federal government “supervise(s) their construction more strictly than has been the case up to now.”

Americans are indeed opposed to placing a nuclear reactor in their backyards, but it is highly questionable whether that view springs from the accident at Three Mile Island. In October 1978, for example, the Harris survey found that people were already rejecting the idea by a 56-35 percent margin—a full six months before the accident. They also rejected the idea of having a coal-fired plant in their communities by an almost 55-37 percent margin. The “shift” against local plants seems, therefore, to have much less to do with Three Mile Island than with a growing national desire to protect one's community against any threat to the environment, nuclear or otherwise.

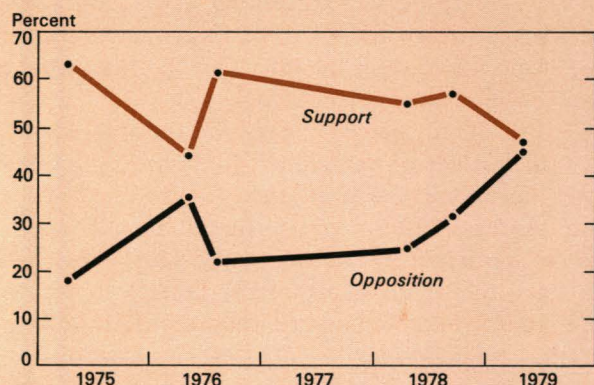
Looking over the full range of evidence, it is clear that in the aftermath of Three Mile Island, public opposition to nuclear power has soared to record levels. But the bigger headline is that even so, the public is unwilling to declare a moratorium on new development—the bottom has not fallen out of public support. Rather, the public's message to the government seems to be this: learn the lessons of what went wrong in Pennsylvania, develop better safeguards and supervision, redouble ef-

forts to find alternative energy sources, but don't write off nuclear power for now.

The Nuclear Roller Coaster

It should be noted that nuclear energy has seen other hard times and has rebounded. Support for nuclear energy nose-dived in 1976, for example, when three engineers from General Electric's reactor division quit their jobs to work for a California movement to halt nuclear power, followed in quick order by the close-down of the Vermont Yankee power plant because of a safety systems flaw and the resignation of a Nuclear Regulatory Commission safety engineer at Indian Point, New York, who charged that the reactors there were unsafe. In the aftermath of all these events, support for continued building of nuclear plants plunged to 44 percent positive, 35 percent negative. But within three months memories faded, and support rebounded to 61 percent positive, 22 percent negative. (See Figure 1.)

Figure 1
HARRIS MEASUREMENTS OF SUPPORT AND
OPPOSITION TO THE BUILDING OF MORE
NUCLEAR POWER PLANTS
IN THE UNITED STATES



These changes suggest that the public is ambivalent toward nuclear power and has only an incomplete understanding of it. Thus, people are crisis-oriented and their opinions change in reaction to headlines. Issues move quickly in and out of the public consciousness, and as fears or frustrations grow, the opinion trend lines begin to look like roller coaster tracks.

Public seesawing over nuclear power is by no means a new phenomenon. In September 1945, for instance, the National Opinion Research Center (NORC) found 56 percent agreeing that "splitting the atom will prove the greatest invention in 1,000 years." The same survey found that by more than a 2-1 margin (52-22 percent), Americans felt that "people everywhere will be better off . . . because somebody learned how to split the atom." One year later, however, the postwar euphoria had worn thin. Only 37 percent thought people would be better off, and 38 percent predicted we would be worse off because the atom had been split.

Cushioning the Blows of Three Mile Island

Why do so many Americans cling to nuclear power, even in the wake of Three Mile Island?

One factor clearly moderating the blow was that, while disturbed by the accident, people were not extremely surprised. Many people accept nuclear power not because they believe uncritically in its excellent safety record and back-up safety systems, but rather because they feel the nuclear risk is worth taking. Seven months *before* the reactor accident, at a time when Americans favored nuclear energy by an almost 2-1 margin (57-31 percent), a Harris survey also found that:

- 57 percent felt the "escape of radioactivity into the atmosphere" was a major problem; after the accident, 62 percent felt that way;

- 69 percent considered the "chance that escape of radioactive materials can have adverse effects on people's health" a major problem in a 1978 Harris survey; 75 percent felt this way after Three Mile Island;

- 54 percent thought the "chance of an explosion in case of an accident" a major problem; 62 percent felt that way after Three Mile Island;

- only 26 percent rated nuclear power as "very safe."

The sense of fear has increased somewhat on each of these questions since Three Mile Island, but the critical point is that *before* the accident, the public had already factored the risks of nuclear power into their support equation. The public may be more worried now, but it was worried before, too.

The fact that people have come to accept nuclear power, despite its known risks, points to the second and even more important factor that cushioned public reaction to the reactor accident. One might call it the "energy syndrome": a widespread public belief that energy underpins our economy and lifestyles; that the op-



tions for developing new energy supplies are limited, and given all this, that it is better to take a risk with nuclear power than to shut down the industry and jeopardize our entire way of life.

Significantly, the highest support level for nuclear energy in the past four years was recorded in 1975, just after President Ford introduced his energy independence proposals, which included a \$3 per barrel tariff on imported oil and increases in domestic production. As the public once again focused on the seriousness of the nation's energy problems, Harris found that support for nuclear energy was better than 3-1 positive (63-19 percent).

The Three Mile Island accident occurred during a similar period of rising fears about energy, and that may well have blunted reaction to the event. In February of this year, the number of Americans who thought the energy situation was "very serious" stood at only 33 percent. But then in rapid-fire succession came the traumatic cutoff of Iranian oil, sharply higher prices at the gas pump and threats of unleaded gasoline shortages, which combined with long-standing concern over deficits in the balance of payments. By April 6-9, two weeks after the accident at Three Mile Island, over 55 percent believed the energy situation was "very serious." Worry levels even exceeded those during the 1973-74 OPEC oil embargo, when the highest level of concern registered by Harris was 50 percent. It is entirely plausible that in the absence of rising fears this spring over the nation's overall energy problems, reaction to Three Mile Island might have been much more severe.

In the public's view, domestic energy alternatives to nuclear power at this point are few and fraught with problems. Domestic oil is in short supply, though the public favors measures such as offshore drilling and price decontrol to boost the oil supply. Coal is more popular than nuclear power, but its perceived plenitude is offset somewhat by fears that greater reliance upon coal will increase pollution. While Americans find solar power very appealing, they are also skeptical about its immediate potential. An overwhelming number of Americans (89 percent) favor all-out solar research and development, but only about half (52 percent) believe we possess the technical know-how today to convert solar energy into a major power source. Thus, nuclear energy is seen as one way of hedging our bets in the event solar power fails to provide the necessary fix.

The environmental movement and California Governor Jerry Brown have been pushing another set of energy options: cut wastefulness and/or impose limits on economic growth. Americans today recognize their own wastefulness as one of the chief villains in the energy scenario. But the intensified debate over nuclear power comes at a time when they are *less* receptive to energy cutbacks and no-growth solutions than at any time in recent years. Forced to choose between an all-out effort to increase energy production or an all-out

effort to cut consumption, more than twice as many Americans (57-24 percent) opt for more production—up sharply from 1977, when the production answer was selected by a much thinner, 41-32 percent margin. So far, as long as the public has demanded more production, it has always looked upon nuclear power as a necessary part of the energy mix.

Forecast for the Future: Very Cloudy

What about the future? In the post-Three Mile Island environment, what do people foresee as our main sources of energy in the years ahead even after the accident? By the year 2000, the public believes, the fossil fuel era will be over. A scant 3 percent of the public now believe that oil will be our chief electrical energy source at the turn of the century. Coal is expected to slide downhill, with only 8 percent feeling that it will be a major energy source twenty years from now.

Clearly, the public is betting less on fossil fuel than on new technology—the technology that will permit us to increase both nuclear and solar power in coming decades. Only 5 percent believe that solar energy is a major source of supply, but 17 percent think it will be a major source two to five years from now, 25 percent in six to ten years, 27 percent in eleven to fifteen years, 29 percent in sixteen to twenty years, and 32 percent in the twenty-first century.

In the public's view, the rise in dependence on nuclear power will be less dramatic: 9 percent see it as a major energy source today, 18 percent think it will serve that purpose in two to five years, 29 percent, six to ten years out, and 27 percent, some twenty years from now. By any measure, however, nuclear power is seen as *the* leading source of electrical power until the turn of the century.

Yet the outlook for nuclear power is not entirely sanguine. The need to bury nuclear wastes for thousands of years, without leakage, ranks even today as the most serious problem the public sees with nuclear power. As witnessed by the 65-70,000 who marched on Washington in early May, the new debate will also bring forth a greatly strengthened opposition to nuclear power that, even before the events at Three Mile Island, was showing more visibility in public opinion polls. The opposition may now redouble its efforts to delay existing construction for safety reasons, adding greatly to the plant costs.

Time is seemingly on the side of the opponents. Even in the absence of Three Mile Island, nuclear power plants were looking less and less attractive to their ultimate customers, the electric utility companies. Stiff political opposition, lengthy construction delays caused by protest groups, unresolved policy questions over waste storage, and now, renewed debate over safety—all of these may cause the utilities to choose a course of less resistance, such as coal, rather than gambling on nuclear power, whatever its merits. The debate and the public opinion polls may be merely academic. ☐



by Gene Pokorny

Living Dangerously... Sometimes

Surveying the many public policy issues embroiling the United States today, it is striking how many center on the same essential question: How much risk are we prepared to take, both as individuals and as a nation, in order to enjoy the fruits of industrialized society? Nuclear power, government health and safety regulations, the debate over cancer, the debate over various forms of air and water pollution, indeed, even the debate over SALT—all compel policy makers to weigh public risks against public benefits.

This is no easy task, for it cuts deep into the core of what a modern democracy is all about. Consider two of the threshold questions:

- How much risk should a society be allowed to impose on an individual for the collective good? For example, should we force developments like nuclear power on communities and individual families, knowing that the benefits will be widely shared but the potential dangers will be limited to those living nearby?

- Moreover, how far should society go in prohibiting individuals from taking risks, especially when they are informed of the dangers and wish to proceed voluntarily? The outcry over a government ban on saccharin raised this issue in its most acute form, but it runs through many other policy areas as well. For example, should a person who is willing to take a high-risk job for higher pay be prohibited from doing so by OSHA?

Both of these questions lead to a complex series of other issues. For example, if one takes the position that informed individuals should be allowed to take risks, one must then confront questions like these:

- How can we tell who is informed and who is not? And how are the uninformed to be protected?

- How can a regulatory system be established that permits different standards for different people?

- Is society obliged to pay the costs of individual risk-takers who fail? Suppose a person works in a mine for double pay knowing it is potentially hazardous. Should taxpayers bear the costs of disability payments if he is injured?

- How can one even be sure that risks are taken voluntarily? Is not a child growing up in Appalachian

coal country—even the best informed child—under some coercion from family, society, and economic circumstances to go into the mines? Is a free, informed choice among highly limited options truly a free choice?

This brief article is clearly not the place to discuss these matters in depth. What we propose to do, instead, is to look at the way that the American public tries to resolve broad, philosophical questions about the trade-offs between risk and benefit and then look at specific cases of the way those beliefs are applied in practice.

A More Dangerous Place

To most Americans, life is not only more complex but more dangerous than in more innocent times. Two-thirds of those questioned in a 1978 survey by our firm, Cambridge Reports, Inc., said that dangers to the average person's health and safety are greater today than fifty years ago. The primary cause, these respondents said, is the increased pollution of our industrialized society, which is blamed mostly on automobiles. Frequent reports of "unsatisfactory" air conditions around the country and the environmental movement have apparently left a deep imprint on the public consciousness. As for the minority (one out of five) who thought that dangers were receding, the reason most often cited was that advances in medicine and pollution and safety regulations have made the world less hazardous to health.

Our research clearly shows that most Americans believe their health and welfare are at risk in today's world. But do people feel it is *society's* role to reduce or eliminate these hazards? Two Americans in five say that the government—acting for society—should indeed try to reduce the risks that everyone faces in life as much as possible. Yet, for every adult who wants a mandated, reduced-risk or risk-free society, there is another who opposes this idea. In fact, almost one-half of the adults surveyed (45 percent) say that it is the responsibility of the individual, not government, to reduce various risks and adopt safety precautions.

Daily life demands that people take some risks—risks of accident, injury, exposure to dangerous sub-

stances, or whatever—in order to gain benefits such as jobs or more income. In our survey, only 23 percent said that the risks they took every day exceeded the benefits they obtained. Sixty-two percent, on the other hand, said that the benefits were at least equal to or greater than the risks they incurred.

In general, do you think the risks you take every day are greater than the benefits you get, about equal to the benefits you get, or do you get more benefits than you personally take risks for?

Risks greater than benefits	23%
Risks equal to benefits	31
Benefits greater than risks	31
Don't know	15

The segments of the population most likely to feel that the risks of everyday life outweigh the benefits include blacks, people whose total income is less than \$10,000, and people with low levels of education. Those who feel the opposite tend to be whites, people in the twenty-six to forty-five year old bracket, those earning over \$10,000 a year, the college-educated, and residents of suburban and rural areas.

One of the most consistent patterns to emerge from our research is that the more control that people feel they have over a situation, the more they are willing to incur personal risk—and, frequently, the less protection they want from the government. On the other hand, when people feel they have little control and that risks are being imposed upon them involuntarily, they insist upon some form of protection even if that raises costs.

In our 1978 survey, we asked respondents to consider three different types of risks and the options they would choose in each case. The three involved atmospheric pollution (an electric power plant), product safety (airbags in automobiles), and working conditions (exposure to dangerous substances). In the two cases where people had little individual control, a majority opted for the low-risk option, even though it would cost more money. In the case of automobile airbags, however, a majority said they would prefer not to have them, even though the airbags would decrease the risk of personal injury in an accident.

I'd like to present you with a series of choices people might make between risks and benefits. In each case, I'd like you to tell me which choice you would make personally.

An electric power plant that produced visible smoke and some air or water pollution or an alternative electric power plant that cost twice as much and raised electricity bills by 25 percent but produced no pollution.

Pollution-producing plant	27%
More expensive, non-pollution-producing plant	57
Don't know	17

An automobile equipped with airbags that gave reasonable certainty you would not be injured in a collision below 30 miles per hour or one that was not equipped with airbags but cost \$500 less to purchase.

Automobile with airbags	35%
Automobile without airbags	52
Don't know	13

A job where there was a chance you might be exposed to dangerous substances or a job where there was no chance you would be exposed to dangerous substances, but which paid only two-thirds as much in salary.

Job with possible dangerous exposure	24%
Job with no dangerous exposure	62
Don't know	14

Among these respondents, 29 percent always selected the risk-free, and more costly, alternative. Some 13 percent were always willing to take the risk. But more than one-half were selective—that is, they did not always opt for risk or for safety. For this one-half of the public, it is a case of “it all depends.” The crucial factor appears to be how much control they felt they had over the circumstances involved. Interestingly, there were almost no classic demographic differences between those who would always accept some risk and those who would never do so. The willingness or refusal to assume risk did not seem to be a function of income, age, race, education, or other traditional demographic factors.

The public is evenly split on the more philosophical question of whether we should create a society without risk to the individual. A large majority, 72 percent, say such a thing is simply not possible, never mind the cost:

Do you think it is actually possible—putting aside the question of whether it is worth the cost—to create a society without risk to the individual person or not?

Yes	13%
No	72
Not sure	15

But more interestingly, even if it were possible, two adults in five (39 percent) don't want to create a society without risk to the individual, compared to 38 percent who say they do. This division is closely related to a point made earlier, namely, that general attitudes in the country are almost evenly split between those who say that if people want to take risks, they should be allowed to do so, versus those who hold that society should try to reduce risk as much as possible for the average person, even if that means some loss of personal choice.

Two areas where the trade-offs between risks and benefits have attracted considerable public attention and which help to illustrate the way that people apply their attitudes in practice are in the debates over national cancer policy and nuclear power.

A 1978 proprietary study undertaken by Cambridge Reports for Shell Oil Company (and released with Shell's permission) sheds some light on the complexity of the cancer issue. The survey examined the attitudes of three separate groups: the American public at large, people living near chemical plants, and a group of chemical plant employees. Their attitudes were probed on a wide range of subjects, including cancer, the danger of exposure to toxic substances, work-related safety and health issues, and general environmental concerns.

The survey showed that on specific questions about cancer risks, much of the same ambivalence could be found as we saw earlier on philosophical issues. Thus, on the one hand, a large majority wanted to be free to make their own decisions about the use of potential carcinogens such as saccharin. Despite this, majorities also felt that other people would probably not take the time or effort to inform themselves about the dangers of cancer. Furthermore, when pressed, many respondents admitted that they were not well enough informed to make intelligent choices about risk either. In general, the survey showed that while a majority generally want to be free to make personal decisions about cancer risks, about one-quarter of the public wants to limit *all* exposure to carcinogens while another one-quarter feels that decisions should *always* be left up to the general public.

Among the public at large, there was a fairly even division on the question of whether most cancer-causing substances are things that people voluntarily choose to use, such as cigarettes, or things that people are involuntarily exposed to, such as pollutants. Two-thirds of the public agreed, however, that the government ought to treat substances that are voluntarily used differently from substances to which they are involuntarily subjected. This finding was consistent with the earlier research discussed above.

There was one contradictory finding in the Shell study that was both sharp and surprising. When asked about an outright ban on all "voluntarily used" cancer-causing substances in foods and other consumer goods, only 23 percent said they would support it while 72 percent rejected it, saying that people should be allowed to choose for themselves. Yet, when the question was rephrased (even though the public policy outcome would be identical), 72 percent endorsed a proposition similar to the Delaney Amendment which said that "no substance" should be added to any food or medicine if it is known to cause cancer in man or animal.

This reversal of attitudes about government's role in reducing cancer risk suggests that a quarter of the population is firmly committed to federal limits on car-

cinogen exposure, and about the same number are committed to leaving the choice of risks up to the individual. The majority left in the middle is ambivalent; in theory it opposes a government ban on cancer-causing substances, but in practice, people have doubts about the workability of a "free choice" policy and tend to back off. Consider these results:

- By a plurality of 48-38 percent, people feel that others won't take the time to inform themselves in order to make reasonable choices, and thus, the government has to provide some form of protection.

- Some 71 percent claim that they themselves will become well informed, but only 36 percent trust most people to do so.

- Only 24 percent feel confident that they are informed enough today about cancer risks to make informed choices.

It is also noteworthy that 59 percent would prefer to let individuals make their own choices for substances that have "real" benefit, such as saccharin for diabetics, but reject the idea of individual choice for items without "real" benefits, such as food coloring.

Perhaps the most fascinating finding of the study was the difference that emerged between the three survey groups on the role of government in regulating plant safety. While the plant workers themselves recognized that they had fairly dangerous jobs and saw a fairly high risk of exposure to carcinogens, they were on the whole more supportive of industry efforts to improve the safety of the workplace and less interested in the imposition of stricter federal regulations. The general public saw less risk for themselves and correspondingly had less interest in protective measures. The group that was most concerned about safety of chemical plants around the country were the neighbors—people who received some of the bad effects such as unsightliness, odor, or possible exposure but did not share the relatively high salaries and benefits of those who worked inside the plants.

The Nuclear Choice

Nuclear power raises somewhat different questions of risk taking, for the distinction between voluntary and involuntary choice does not arise in the same way as it does, for example, on issues like saccharin or helmets for motorcyclists. We as a society may voluntarily choose to accept the risks of nuclear power, but individuals who object are not at any less risk than those who endorse it. About the only thing that dissenters can do is to move away or join the protest movement.

Interestingly, the incident at Three Mile Island has heightened the public's awareness of both the risks *and* the benefits of nuclear power. The dangers of nuclear plants have, of course, been shown more graphically than at any previous time. On the other hand, the dependence of large areas of the country on existing plants has also been well demonstrated. These changes in the

public's perceptions have raised the stakes on both sides of a risk/benefit trade-off.

In a survey of 800 respondents conducted shortly after the Three Mile Island incident, we found that a plurality continued to favor nuclear power plant construction, albeit by a slim margin:

Do you generally favor or oppose the construction of more nuclear power plants?

Favor	47%
Oppose	40
Don't know	14

When we posed the idea of closing current plants, however, we found overwhelming rejection. Even many of those who do not want to take the risk of *more* plants are unwilling to forgo the benefits of those that exist now:

Do you agree or disagree: Three Mile Island shows that the critics were right—we should close all of the nuclear power plants in the country.

Agree	13%
Disagree	81
Don't know	6

There is, of course, one way that the nuclear power question can be posed in voluntary terms, and that is on the question of siting. A Gallup survey conducted in early April 1979, shortly after Three Mile Island, indicates a wide discrepancy between people's overall views and the choices they make in a specific risk/benefit situation. As the figures below illustrate, 63 percent feel it is at least somewhat important to continue construction of nuclear plants, but just about the same number are opposed to the siting of plants near their own homes:

To meet future energy needs—how important do you feel it is to have more nuclear power plants built?

Extremely important	29%
Somewhat important	34
Not too important	14
Not at all important	17
No opinion	6

How do you feel about the construction of nuclear power plants in your area—that is, within 5 miles of here? Would you be against the construction of nuclear power plants within 5 miles of where you live?

Against	62%
Not against	33
No opinion	5

Summing Up

This discussion has suggested several general conclu-

sions about the state of public opinion today:

- Over two-thirds of adults today do not think a risk-free society is possible, but even if it were, there is an even split between those who think it is desirable and those who prefer to live in a world where there is some danger.

- Similarly, the public is sharply divided over the question of whether society should do everything it can to reduce risks to people, even if that means some reduction of personal freedom, or whether individuals should usually be expected to look after themselves.

- In general, where people involuntarily face risks over which they have little personal control—such as the risk of industrial air pollution—a majority want the government to intervene and protect them. Where, however, the risk is voluntary in nature and individuals are free to make choices—such as the risk of taking saccharin—they would prefer to leave the matter in their own hands and keep the government out.

Readers should be cautioned, however, that nothing is less risk-free than public opinion polls themselves. As issues have become more complex and the public has been forced to deal with complicated problems, the analyst of public opinion faces increasingly difficult problems of understanding. One such problem in this area is that risks and benefits often get caught up in emotional or symbolic side issues. The question of whether the public should pay higher prices for more energy, for example, is quite different in the public mind from whether big oil companies need higher profits to finance exploration. Similarly, the question of whether "I should have free choice to decide what I eat" is entirely different, for the average citizen, from whether or not the government ought to allow food processors to put potential carcinogens in food.

As we saw on the question whether the government should ban from food all substances that could cause cancer, phrasing can make up to a fifty-point difference on the results of a question whose objective public policy consequences are the same. Some might simply dismiss this as an example of a common truism in survey research—that the way a question is worded determines the outcome. In this instance, however, it also sharply points up the ambivalence of the American people about risks and benefits, or free choice versus protection.

On one hand, Americans today see risks and benefits that they do not fully understand and are not certain can be traded off. On the other hand, they want to be free to make choices about the risks and benefits they take and receive. Since, however, they lack confidence in their knowledge and in their ability to make appropriate choices, they are constantly shifting back and forth. Sometimes, they boldly demand choice; on other occasions, they seek protection. This inconsistency presents a challenge to leaders in the public and private sectors as they try to respond to an uncertain public will. ☐

HOW AMERICANS ARE REACTING TO THE LATEST ENERGY CRUNCH

A Report by the Editors

Policy makers across the government now seem to be caught in a curious paradox: the more serious the energy shortage becomes and the more speeches that are made from Washington, the less the public believes in what they see and hear.

In January 1978, some 47 percent of those interviewed told a survey team from CBS News/*New York Times* that stories about the energy crunch were fabricated "so oil and gas companies can charge higher prices." At the time, public disbelief was thought surprisingly high.

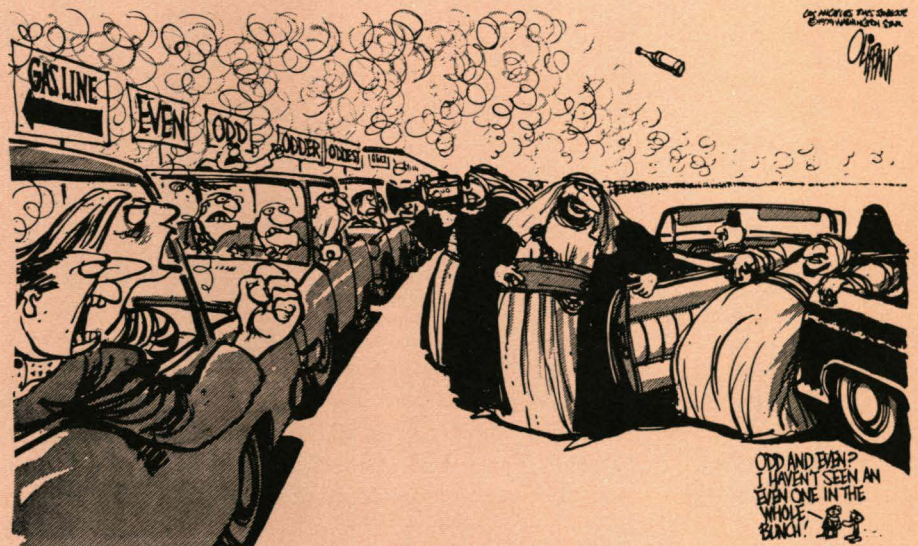
Yet, a year and a half later, with imports rising and gas lines reappearing, the number who believe the shortages are "artificial, deliberately brought about by the oil companies" has shot up to 77 percent, according to a May poll by Gallup.

Roper surveys, asking whether the shortages are real or contrived, have also shown a sharp change in public attitudes:

	Real	Contrived
May 1977	40%	33%
January 1979	29	48

Moreover, the public is becoming less convinced that the United States must rely upon foreign oil imports to meet its energy needs. Some 38 percent told Gallup this May that they thought the country is self-sufficient in oil, up five points from a survey two years earlier. In approximately the same time frame, Roper found that the number who believe the U.S. imports 35 percent or more of its oil has dropped from 56 percent to 43 percent.

The polls also suggest that President Carter's public addresses on energy have had little impact. After his April 1977 speech declaring the energy crisis



"I LIKE TO COME OUT AND REVIEW THE TROOPS FROM TIME TO TIME... GIVE THEM A LITTLE PER-TALK OR TWO, KEEP UP THEIR MORALE, STUFF LIKE THAT..."

Pat Oliphant, © 1979 The Washington Star
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"the moral equivalent of war," 57 percent told CBS News/*New York Times* interviewers that the situation was not as bad as the President said. This April, the President returned to the airwaves, calling for decontrol, and the level of skepticism was exactly the same: 57 percent.

Why is the public so unyielding? After interviewing Californians this May, Mervin D. Field concluded that a major underlying reason is that 66 percent of the public believe there are still large amounts of undiscovered oil in the United States that can be tapped. Other polls support his conclusion.

At the same time, as many observers have pointed out, there are widespread feelings that the large oil companies are holding back supplies in order to manipulate prices upward. Louis Harris found that 87 percent held that view; in New Jersey, the Eagleton poll found 80 per-

cent agreed; and in California, Field found 70 percent thought the companies were "profiteering."

In one poll after another, the oil companies lead the list of scapegoats. In California, for example, 70 percent blamed higher gas prices on the oil companies, 16 percent on the President and others in Washington, 15 percent on OPEC. Notable, in an ABC News/Harris survey, the three reasons cited as *least* important in creating the energy problem were "too many big automobiles being driven by Americans" (38 percent); "insufficient economic incentives to producers of oil and natural gas" (31 percent); and "restrictive Environmental Protection Agency regulations" (25 percent).

According to Lou Harris, President Carter may have been hoisted on his own petard on the decontrol issue. When the President first announced the

program, he won public backing by 56-38 percent. In emphasizing how much profit would accrue to the oil companies, however, the President only played to public fears and a month later, Harris found sentiment had turned against de-control, 49-42 percent.

One of the more interesting points to emerge from recent surveys is that despite people's anger at the oil companies, their wrath has not yet turned into strong demands for a governmental counterattack. In California, where public resentment is particularly high, Mervin Field's interviewers sampled the views of 979 people in May and came up with these results:

	Agree	Disagree
Oil companies manipulate supplies to raise prices	87%	8%
Oil companies care less about consumers than more profits for stockholders	85	11
Oil companies should be taken over by government and nationalized	35	56
More government regulation of oil companies will only make gas shortages worse	53	34
Efficiency and know-how of large oil companies an important reason for high standard of living in U.S.	53	36
Oil companies need healthy profits in order to make investments in new supplies	48	47

PLEASE NOTE:

IN ORDER TO PROTECT SMALL OR IMPRESSIONABLE CHILDREN OR PERSONS WHO MIGHT OBJECT BECAUSE OF WHAT THEY CONSTRUCT TO BE BAD TASTE, THE FOLLOWING DISGUSTING, OBSCENE STATEMENTS HAVE BEEN PRINTED UPSIDE DOWN.

TEXACO INC.—81% INCREASE IN PROFITS
GULF OIL CO.—61% INCREASE IN PROFITS
MARATHON OIL—107% INCREASE IN PROFITS
EXXON—37% INCREASE IN PROFITS

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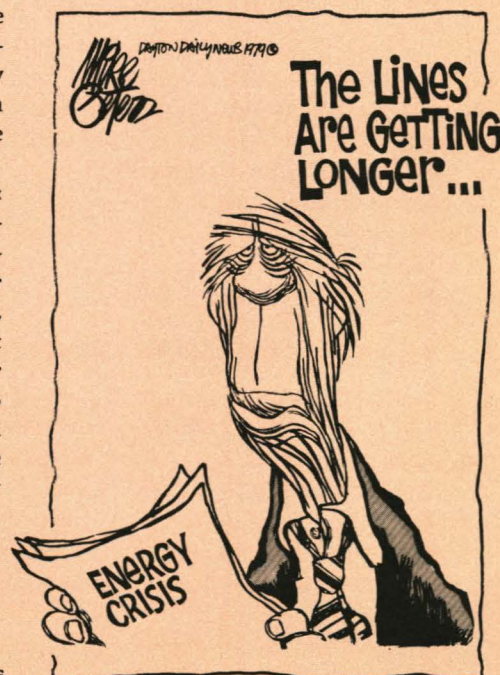
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As Field concluded, "the reason that the public does not endorse such drastic action as nationalization stems largely from the feeling that a government-run oil industry would worsen the gasoline shortage."

One other point also emerges clearly: because so many Americans are non-believers, there is little readiness to accept heavy sacrifices, either in price or consumption. Two-thirds, for example, told interviewers in New Jersey that they might be willing to cut waste or even tighten their belts, but only 26 percent would accept major changes in their lifestyles. And four out of five interviewed by NBC News said they had already taken steps to cut back on consumption.

There is no easy end in sight.

The Editors



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by Irving Crespi

MODERN MARKETING THEY COULD

Over the past forty years, public opinion polls have unquestionably had a growing impact upon politics in the United States. From the White House to the courthouse, political candidates now rely heavily upon polls in mapping out their campaigns. News organizations are also giving them more and more attention, and in recent years, all three national networks as well as several of the nation's leading newspapers have initiated polling services of their own.

To date, however, extensive usage of public opinion surveys has been almost entirely restricted to the political arena and to journalism. Within the government itself, where the day-to-day policy decisions are actually made, polls are rarely used. To those who believe that polls can be an important tool of democracy, their role still remains one of promise, not performance.

It is the thesis of this article that men and women in official power, whether elective or appointive, could govern the nation more wisely—and more effectively—if they learned to draw upon the full fruits of survey research. Private business found years ago that success in the marketplace depended to a surprisingly large degree upon how well it understood and responded to the needs of consumers. With government now under fire from every quarter, it is apparent that the “bureaucrats” now need to learn the same lesson.

Public Hearings That Aren't Public

Whether opinion polls will ever make a significant contribution to public policy process hinges primarily upon their use by the executive agencies. Congress, of course, has traditionally been looked upon as the “voice of the people” within our system, but over the past half century, its role in shaping government policy has been considerably attenuated. The executive agencies in Washington typically play a central role in drafting legislation, and once bills have been enacted, it is they and not the Congress who promulgate the guidelines

and regulations. And it is also they, unfortunately, who so often seem out of touch with the public at large.

It is true that in formulating guidelines and regulations, agencies do hold public hearings. But even though the testimony proffered there does provide valuable information, such hearings have obvious limitations. With few exceptions, those who appear are technical experts or spokesmen for special interest or lobby groups. Some of the groups that testify claim to represent the general public, but one does not have to disagree with their positions to note that theirs is a self-appointed representation.

Even when agencies make a concerted effort to evaluate public opinion, the methods used are all too often insufficient. Last year, for example, the Food and Drug Administration, the Department of Agriculture, and the Federal Trade Commission combined forces to ferret out public attitudes on food labeling. As a result of their efforts, 10,000 letters were received, a total that was reportedly rivaled only by public reaction to the banning of saccharin. Analysts of public opinion, however, demonstrated long ago that such letters typically reflect the concerns of especially concerned segments of the public and seldom give a reliable indication of the views of the general public. Nationwide hearings were also held, attracting “avid public participation,” as some 500 “consumers” came to express their views on food labeling. Again, however, one does not have to be a sampling statistician to question how representative those voices were. Their testimony may have provided valuable insight to the agencies, but that is not the point. The issue here is the adequacy of such public testimony to determine true public attitudes about food labeling.

What is dramatically missing from nearly all public hearings is direct evidence—unfiltered by the interpretations of special interest or lobby groups—of the wants, needs, aspirations, and concerns of the general

TECHNIQUES: WORK IN WASHINGTON, TOO

public. The latter, presumably, has had its opportunity to make its voice heard on Election Day. But there is no way that election results can identify the "will of the people" on thousands of government policies such as food labeling.

Is Anybody Listening?

Under such circumstances, it should not come as a surprise that public opinion polls reveal an alienated electorate, highly antagonistic to "big government." The proverbial man in the street knows from personal experience that his views—and those of his neighbors—have virtually no chance of being heard by the officials making decisions that vitally affect his interests. It may not even be a matter of agreement or disagreement with those decisions that account for the public's sense of alienation but only that people feel a lack of participation—some sense that one is at least being listened to.

Government agencies do undertake considerable research in developing and evaluating programs, formulating guidelines, and constructing regulatory codes. And demonstration projects such as the recent experiments with guaranteed annual incomes do in fact provide helpful information to policy makers and administrators. Moreover, the government often commissions public surveys as part of its research effort so that, when all agencies are combined, the federal establishment is undoubtedly the largest single user of surveys in the country.

Most of the government-sponsored surveys, however, try to elicit "hard" information about public behavior, not public attitudes and opinions. Thus, information is obtained about types and rates of employment, household income and expenditures, patterns of energy consumption, educational careers, use of drugs and alcohol, health care habits, housing characteristics, vacation travel, use of mass transportation, and so on. These data are thought to provide a reliable measure of

"reality" from which causal interrelationships can be inferred and upon which predictive models can be built.

In contrast, government investigators usually treat the opinions and attitudes of the public as subjective variables that only complicate the analysis of objective "reality." For example, attitudes may be measured as part of an evaluation study in order to determine whether a program's effectiveness has been aided or hampered by participant attitudes. Also, many agencies have been paying increasing attention to the improvement of forms and applications by testing them on representative samples of users. Similarly, attitudes are sometimes pre-measured to determine whether they are likely to impede a contemplated program. Sometimes agencies also try to determine the effect of programs upon attitudes, as when participants in job training programs are tested on their motivations to work.

Perhaps the most systematic surveys yet undertaken by the government have tried to measure the effectiveness of informational and advertising campaigns. These campaigns try to drum up volunteers for the armed forces, discourage drug and alcohol abuse, encourage energy conservation, and the like. Typically, advertising agencies develop the campaigns, either under contract or on a nonpaid basis through the Advertising Council. It is not surprising, therefore, that when public reactions to the campaign are sought, investigators employ the techniques of advertising research, testing advertising recall, the ability to play back the content of messages, as well as beliefs, interests, feelings, and behavioral intentions.

Common to all of these approaches, to use the language of the trade, is the view that attitude research should complement the objective analysis of program "outcomes" and "impacts" that has become standardized in many agencies and departments. In other words, policy planners usually construct a model of how a program *should* work and then occasionally they ex-

amine public opinion polls to see if there is any logical reason why they won't work as planned. At best, it is a very crude process.

Yet, if the government would just pause before it acted, first determining the views of both the general public and that segment of the public that would be directly affected by a program, it could then make public opinion part of the formative stages of program development and not simply a force to be coped with after the fact. The difference between treating public attitudes and opinions as a relatively minor variable instead of an influence that should be authoritative is ultimately the difference between technocratic and democratic government.

Marketing Research as a Model for Policy Research

In recent years, some government agencies have in fact shown a spark of interest in going beyond the limited research of the past, all of which suggests that what is happening in government today may parallel what happened in commercial marketing a quarter of a century ago. In the 1950s, the "nose counters" and the "head shrinkers" waged methodological war against each other in the marketing industry. The "nose counters" wanted to develop reliable, objective measures of consumer behavior: who bought what, when, where, and how often. For the most part, they assumed that behavior is unambiguous and readily subject to interpretation, and they concentrated their efforts on obtaining valid samples of the consumer population. Toward that end, they promoted the use of modern probability sampling in consumer surveys, replacing the questionable quota, mail, and street corner samples that then dominated the field.

The "head shrinkers," by way of contrast, insisted that research should answer the question "why?" As behavioral scientists—mostly psychologists and sociologists—they stressed that in order to analyze consumer behavior meaningfully, one has to understand consumer motivations and attitudes. Without such an understanding, they said, the best designed probability sample in the world would provide information of only limited use for the creation of new products and more effective marketing methods.

This methodological war went forward during a time of growing prosperity and technological development. New products were coming rapidly onto the market. But the interesting thing was that the great majority of those new products—some estimates ran as high as 80 percent—failed with the consumer. Since the cost of introducing a new project could be prohibitive, there were growing pressures to cut the failure rate. As a result, companies came to appreciate the need for both *reliable* information—information that could be derived from probability sampling—and information that could explain *why* some products succeeded and others failed—information best derived from motivational research. From the combination of these two needs evolved con-

temporary marketing research.

Intrinsic to this evolution was the belief that to be successful, marketing must be responsive to consumer needs and wants. Instead of building a better mousetrap under the assumption that a market for it can always be developed later, American corporations today market in a way that is explicitly and self-consciously dependent on meeting consumer requirements.

There are two key characteristics of modern marketing that are especially relevant to policy research. First, *before* a product is developed, attitudes and motivations are investigated to identify unfulfilled wants and needs and to test new project ideas. In other words, consumer attitudes play a major role at the initial stage of product development, guiding technical research in directions most likely to satisfy consumer requirements. Second, since a precise match between consumer requirements and product design is seldom achieved on the first try, products are progressively modified and refined in light of continuing attitude research. Thus, in product research, as conducted by contemporary American corporations, consumer attitudes and motivations are investigated at every stage of development to help determine product characteristics.

Edsel versus Mustang

The contrast between the old and new styles of product research is well illustrated by the stories of the Edsel and Mustang. In the case of the Edsel, Detroit first analyzed sales records and conventional consumer surveys to identify those who had been buying. This information was used, among other things, to identify potentially profitable market segments and to establish sales goals. Consumer attitudes and motivations were then analyzed to guide advertising and sales but with little reference to product development. Concurrently, engineers and designers developed the new car. When they finished, it was given to the sales force to sell. The rest is history: the Edsel was one of the great market disasters of our time and its failure was almost devastating to the Ford Motor Company.

The Mustang, in contrast, evolved out of a collaborative interaction between product and consumer research. Consumer attitudes and motivations were first investigated to pinpoint a particular market segment whose automobile needs and desires were not being fulfilled. This information was used to evaluate new engineering and styling concepts until the design of a new, marketable kind of car was developed. Specific engineering and design features were then pretested to determine preferences and priorities among potential buyers. As the car evolved, step by step, pretests continued, covering the name, the price, possible advertisements, and the like. This time, when its new product finally rolled onto the market, Ford scored a major triumph—one that was a large factor in its resurgence in the 1960s.

The lesson seems clear: as exemplified by the Mus-

tang, large corporations that adopt modern marketing techniques can in fact become more responsive to their customers—and more successful. Without glossing over the manipulative purposes to which marketing research can be put, especially with respect to advertising and packaging, it must be recognized that its use today has resulted in a real, if limited, democratization of the marketplace.

Applying Market Research to Policy Research

Unfortunately, as the previous discussion has indicated, most attitudinal research in public policy today is still at the Edsel stage. In recent years, however, the author as well as others have participated in a number of studies which demonstrated that the research model that evolved in marketing during the 1950s is indeed applicable to the public policy field.

One recent MPR study grew out of congressional concern that major repair costs for hidden defects might be placing severe financial burdens on purchasers of new homes. Congress ordered the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to study the feasibility of alternative inspection and warranty programs, and HUD in turn commissioned a survey of public attitudes. One portion of the study was a standard, and necessary, economic analysis of how widespread and serious the problems were. But a parallel survey was also conducted, testing interest in four possible inspection and warranty programs, each differing in coverage and cost. By conducting the surveys in tandem, it was possible to analyze "objective need" and "subjective demand" in relation to each other, a long step in the direction of standard marketing research.

A current MPR study for the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration provides a second illustration of the way marketing techniques can be adopted. In this survey, the public is being asked about twenty-three different safety measures, ranging from mechanical devices to model laws. The measures are at varying stages of technical development, some having advanced no further than the drawing board. It is hoped that the study will indicate to NHTSA which of the measures have a high potential for acceptance, which might be acceptable after modification and/or over a long period of time, and which are likely to be rejected unless drastically modified or unless there are sharp changes in public opinion.

School Integration: A Case Study

Let's look closely at another area of public policy, school integration, where public opinion already plays an obvious role and where a more intelligent use of survey research by the government might prove very fruitful. Numerous integration polls, have, of course, been taken in past years. Some have shown that the principle of school integration has gained acceptance by an overwhelming majority of whites, north and south. Others have documented widespread opposition

Table 1

The question: As you may know, a community committee has been reviewing the balance of black and white students in the city's public schools. The public school system is now considering a number of proposals and before making any final decision would like to get your opinion of them. Here are descriptions of four proposals that are being considered. Would you read them? Now, for each one, would you tell me whether you approve or disapprove of it, and why you feel that way about each one?

	Proportion That Approves Each Plan	
	Whites (percent)	Blacks (percent)
<i>"Magnet" Junior and Senior High Schools</i>		
Two or more existing junior and senior high schools would be reorganized to offer specialized educational programs. For example, one might specialize in science and electronics, and another in a career education for both college and non-college bound students. Each school would have facilities and teachers that would provide the best possible education in its specialty. Students from all over the city, white and black, could select one of these "magnet" schools instead of the regular junior and senior high school serving the area they live in. Students would use regular public transportation, or else transportation would be provided as needed.	64	65
<i>Learning Resource Center</i>		
Seven or eight centers would be located in selected schools throughout the district. Students from different parts of the city would attend them one, two, or three days a week during their regular school hours. Centers would provide elementary, junior, and high school students with special courses that are not available in their regular schools. These courses would be in basic and required subjects, and also in fields of special interest. Classes of these centers would be scheduled so that both white and black students of the same grade would be there at the same time. Transportation between regular "home" schools and the centers would be provided by the city's Public School System.	49	72
<i>Clustering</i>		
This would apply to elementary schools as well as to junior and senior high schools. Groups of three or more schools in roughly the same area of town, but which are mostly white or mostly black, would be combined so that each group would have both white and black students. Each school building would handle only selected grades. For example, one might handle kindergarten through grade 3, and another grades 4 through 6. In other words, in this example, white and black students in a cluster would go to one school from kindergarten through third grade, and another from grades 4 through 6. Transportation would be provided as needed.	32	50
<i>Redistricting of High Schools</i>		
The city would be redistricted into three clusters of high schools, so that there are both white and black students in each cluster. Each student in a cluster would be assigned to one of the high schools in his cluster and would probably stay at that school until graduation. The number of white and black students would be balanced in each school. Transportation would be provided as needed.	26	49
	Number of Interviews (495)	(247)

to busing which is undertaken solely for the purpose of achieving school integration. Still other studies have suggested that white flight from the cities to the suburbs has not been in response to school integration. But what have *not* been done (with few exceptions) have been careful local surveys of the public to find out how best to achieve integration. Instead, while the experts have debated the need for and the effects of compulsory busing, the public (black and white) has had little re-

(Continued on page 58.)

Snapshots

By Karlyn Keene

Since this column first appeared early in the year, our editorial offices at AEI have received many public and private studies that might be of interest to *Public Opinion* readers. We welcome this material. Herein is a capsulized summary of some of the more pertinent.

Reader's Guide: The Gallup organization has recently published the results of a survey that it undertook last summer for the American Library Association on the nation's reading habits. More than half of the respondents told interviewers that they had read a book in the past month, and 77 percent said they had finished at least one in the past year. The books people say they are reading are primarily novels in paperback editions. Other nonfiction reading came in second, biographies third, followed by "how to" books (judging from best-seller lists, the latter may be bought but not always read).

According to the survey, heavy readers (twenty-one books or more a year) are most likely to be female, eighteen to thirty-four years of age and college-educated. The nonreader tends to be male, thirty-five or older, high school-educated or less, and living in a home in the Midwest without children.

Television does appear to have an impact on reading habits, but not necessarily what one might think. Some 43 percent said they would read more if they watched less TV, and 49 percent said that of their children. But half said they would read about the same amount if they watched less television, and some 28 percent said they had actually read a book during the past year *because* of something they saw on TV.

The College Cream: The Chronicle of Higher Education has recently published results of a survey sent to 4000 faculty members in nineteen different fields, asking them to rate the best departments in their academic disciplines.

The study, undertaken by Seymour Martin Lipset and Everett C. Ladd found that Stanford, the University of California at Berkeley, Harvard, and Michigan have the nation's most highly regarded faculties. In business, Stanford came in first, with Harvard and the University of Chicago just behind. In law, 61 percent felt Harvard had the best department, followed by 14 percent for Yale and 8 percent for the University of Chicago. Harvard topped the list in both medicine and economics. The top three in the area of education were Stanford, Ohio State, and Indiana University. In music, Indiana University has the highest reputation, followed by the Juilliard School and the University of Rochester.

The Worker's Paradise: Steelcase, Inc. has recently released the results of a study it commissioned to find out how workers, corporate office planners, and professional office designers look upon the offices of today and tomorrow. While only 58 percent of office workers felt that the quality of life in general has improved over the past ten years, a greater 70 percent felt that way about the quality of working life. By 74-25 percent, office workers gave their companies positive ratings for improving working conditions. Overall, office workers appear satisfied with their office surroundings and their own personal work spaces, but for office workers who must share their offices, there is distinctly less satisfaction. The single most important fact in doing the job well is the ability to concentrate without noise or distractions. The survey was taken by Louis Harris and Associates.

Teen Trends: In a Teen Trends survey taken for *Seventeen* magazine in 1978, teenage girls named crime (30.8 percent), inflation (15.2 percent), and unemployment (6.9 percent) as the major problems facing the United States today. Women's rights came at the bot-

tom of the list with only .5 percent indicating it as first choice of major problems. Two-thirds indicated that they were not involved in political activities, and half of those surveyed considered themselves middle-of-the-road politically.

In ranking issues pertaining to women in society, 75 percent indicated they were very interested in equal education and training while 73 percent expressed an interest in toughening up anti-rape laws. That was followed by meaningful work with adequate compensation (67 percent), equal privilege in granting mortgages, insurance and other credit requirements (47 percent). But only 24.5 percent were very interested in passage of the Equal Rights Amendment.

"Playboy" Profile: For readers of *Playboy*, there were some obvious surprises this spring when the magazine released its survey of American men. The study, conducted for *Playboy* by Louis Harris and Associates, found that far from playing the Don Juan role, the typical American male places a high value on his family life, health, love, and peace of mind. For him, the rewards of hard work provide many of the world's blessings. The essentials of life for the American male are a car, a house, a bank account, and a vacation every year.

At the same time, the study did find strong support for greater personal freedom. Some 51 percent said they favor decriminalization of marijuana, 57 percent favored legalized gambling, and by a close 45-46 percent margin, they opposed legalization of prostitution. Some 61 percent of those surveyed approve of living together without getting married. Yet 52 percent did not believe living together is likely to insure a more successful marriage, an overwhelming majority (73-21 percent) disapproved of open marriage, and a similar majority considered sexual fidelity to be very important to a marriage. Married men, moreover, report the highest level of satisfaction with their sex lives.

Doctors, scientists, and master carpenters are the occupations American men respect most. Finally, American men envision an increasingly important place for leisure in their lives. Bright colors, hair styling, beards, mustaches, and cologne were approved by some three-quarters of those surveyed.

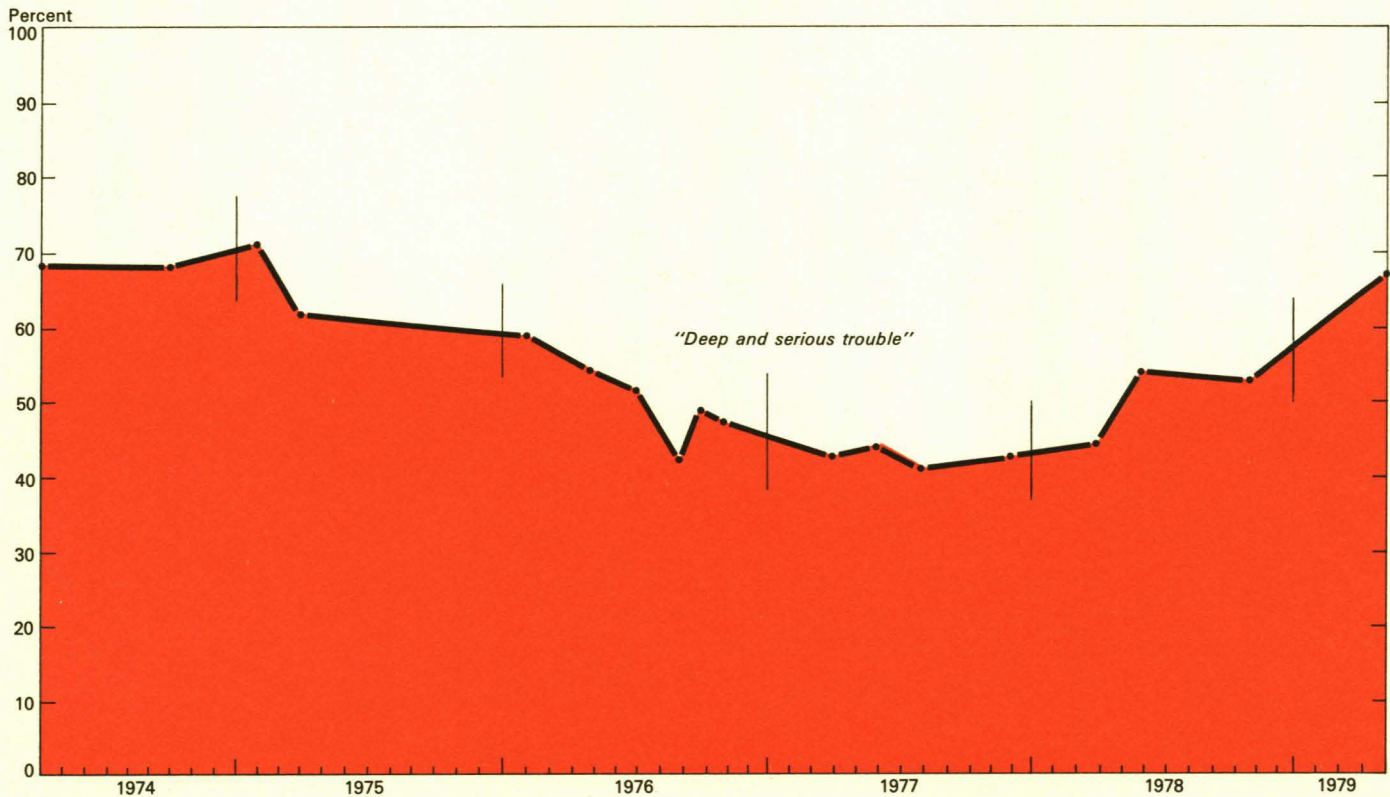


The National Mood

GROWING SENSE OF TROUBLE

Question: In commenting on how things are going in the country, some people tell us that the problems we face are no worse than at any other time in recent years. Others say the country

is really in deep and serious trouble today. What comes closest to your own feeling—the fact that: Problems are no worse than at other times, the country is in deep and serious trouble?



Source: Surveys by Time/Yankelovich, Skelly and White, latest that of April 1979.

EDITORS' NOTE

With inflation punching through the double-digit barrier, with gas shortages cropping up again, and with perceptions spreading that America is more vulnerable abroad, the nation's mood has perceptibly darkened in recent months. As shown above, a survey taken by Yankelovich, Skelly and White found that the number who believe that the country "is in deep and serious trouble" rose in April to 67 percent—over twenty points higher than a year earlier and essentially the same level as during the worst of the 1974 recession.

Other barometers of the national mood point in the same direction. A Roper poll, shown on the next page, indicates that the number who believe the nation is "on the wrong track" has jumped considerably—up to 65 percent, some twenty-one points higher than two years before. Similarly, Yankelovich has found that the number expressing strong confidence in the future is also slipping downward.

Many analysts believe that surveys reporting on the national mood are simply mirror images of general economic attitudes, and in recent months, there have indeed been close parallels. The consumer confidence survey by the University of Michigan, whose complete results are shown in the center spread of this issue, has revealed widespread gloom through most of the past five years, but its April survey found confidence at the lowest level since the 1974 recession. And no wonder—according to other surveys, a majority of Americans now foresee higher inflation, another recession, and a general worsening of economic conditions in the year ahead.

As anxiety has grown, many people also seem to be turning to more drastic solutions. A May survey by George Gallup found 57 percent in favor of new wage and price controls, the highest number Gallup has found in some five years. Other surveys suggest that anti-business feelings are also mounting, encouraging speculation that a political reaction may not be far behind.

Yet, if people were more somber this spring about national affairs, it is also worth noting that many still seem happy in their personal lives. Every recent survey has shown that Americans are more optimistic about their own futures than about the future of the nation.

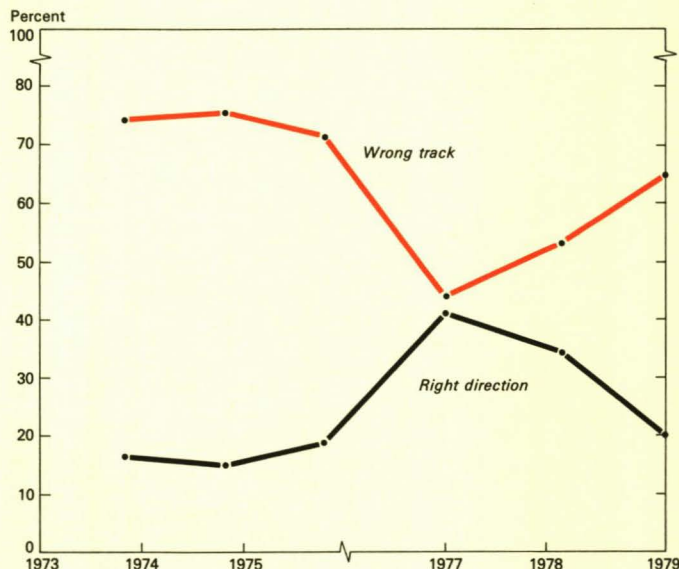
The Editors

	Problems no worse than other times	Deep and serious trouble
March 1974	32%	68%
September 1974	32	68
January 1975	29	71
March 1975	38	62
January 1976	41	59
April 1976	46	54
June 1976	49	51
August 1976	58	42
September 1976	51	49
October 1976	53	47
March 1977	57	43
May 1977	56	44
July 1977	59	41
November 1977	57	43
March 1978	56	44
May 1978	46	54
October 1978	47	53
April 1979	33	67

OPINION ROUNDUP

COUNTRY ON THE WRONG TRACK

Question: Do you feel things in this country are generally going in the right direction today, or do you feel that things have pretty seriously gotten on the wrong track?



	Oct. 1973	Oct. 1974	Oct. 1975	Feb. 1977	Feb. 1978	Feb. 1979
Right direction	16%	15%	19%	41%	34%	20%
Wrong track	74	75	71	44	53	65
Don't know	10	11	9	14	13	15

Source: Surveys by the Roper Organization (Roper Report 79-3), February 10-24, 1979.

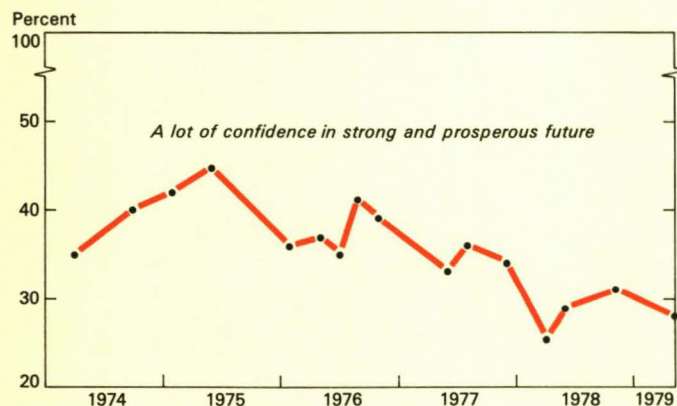
... HEADING TO UNCERTAIN FUTURE

Confidence in strong and prosperous future

	A lot of confidence	Some confidence	No real confidence
March 1974	35%	46%	19%
September 1974	40	41	19
January 1975	42	44	15
May 1975	45	41	15
January 1976	36	46	18
April 1976	37	46	16
June 1976	35	48	16
August 1976	41	44	15
October 1976	39	46	15
May 1977	33	52	16
July 1977	36	47	17
November 1977	34	47	19
March 1978	25	52	23
May 1978	29	52	19
October 1978	31	45	23
April 1979	28	48	23

Source: Surveys by Time/Yankelovich, Skelly and White, latest that of April 1979.

Question: Do you have a lot of confidence, some confidence or no real confidence that in a few years from now our country will be strong and prosperous?



NOTE TO READERS

The material in this section has been prepared with the invaluable assistance of the Roper Center, the oldest and largest archives of opinion survey data in the world. The Roper Center is an affiliate of the University of Connecticut, Yale University, and Williams College. The Center's archives are open to all students of public opinion on a contractual basis. Everett Carl Ladd, Jr., who serves as Consulting Editor of this Roundup, is Co-Executive Director of the Roper Center.

Most of the responses shown in these surveys were gathered either by personal interviews (Harris and Gallup polls) or by telephone (CBS/ New York Times and the NBC/Associated Press polls). Unless otherwise noted, the samples usually consist of approximately 1,500 voting age men and women, chosen to constitute a representative sample of the entire U.S. population. In the typical sample of 1,500 respondents,

there is a 95 percent chance or better that the margin of error will not exceed ± 3 percent variation from the distribution which would appear if the nation's entire population were questioned. The possibilities for error are larger when numbers are displayed for subcategories of each sample.

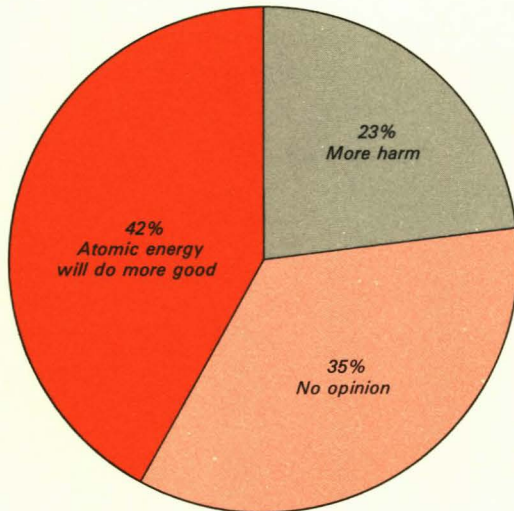
The reader may note that in some cases a "no opinion" column is shown while in others it is not. This reflects a common practice in the publication of polls: when the "no opinion" or "undecided" responses are relatively small, on the order of 10 percent or less, one reports only the answers of those who have a definite opinion. However, when "no opinion" answers are a high proportion of the sample, they are reported because they reveal a substantial degree of unawareness or uncertainty within the populace on the issues in question.

Nuclear Power

Strong Public Support in the Early Years

1948

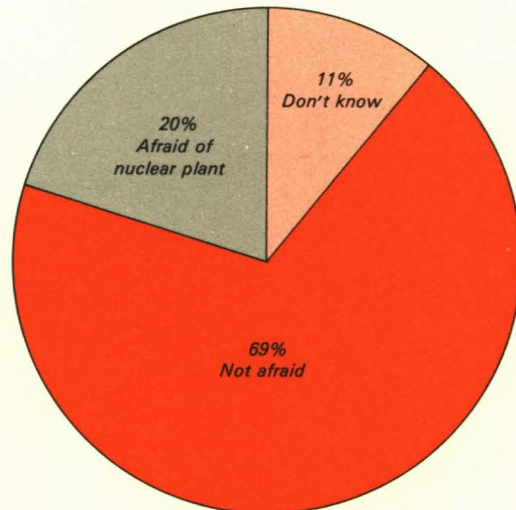
Question: Do you think that, in the long run, atomic energy will do more good than harm?



Source: Survey by American Institute of Public Opinion (Gallup), October 1948.

1956

Question: Would you be afraid to have a plant located in this community which was run by atomic energy?

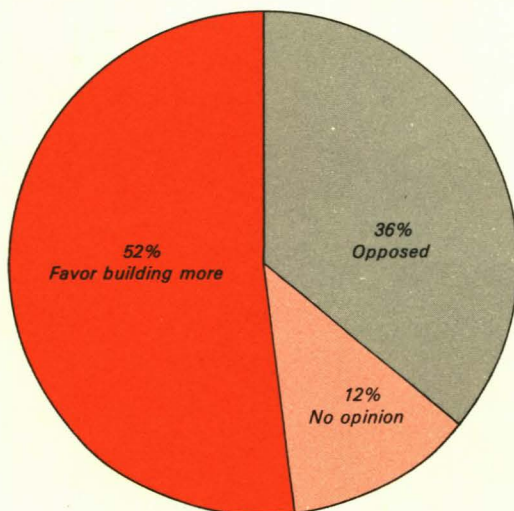


Source: Survey by American Institute of Public Opinion (Gallup), January 1956.

In the 70's: More Uncertainty

MOST POLLS SHOWED SUPPORT

Question: Some people say that the nation needs to develop new power sources from nuclear energy in order to meet our needs for the future. Other people say that the danger to the environment and the possibility of accidents are too great. What do you think? Are you in favor of building more nuclear energy power plants or are you opposed to building more of them?

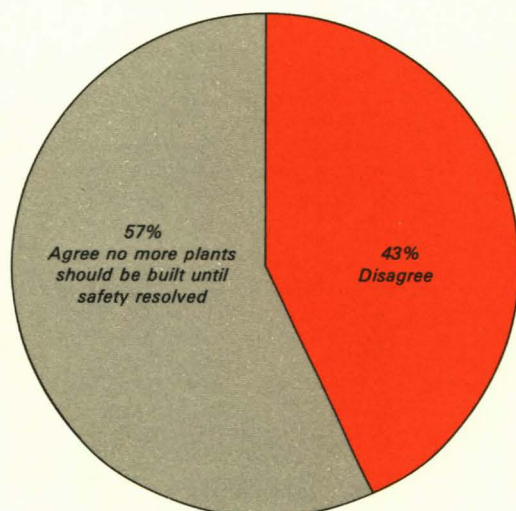


Note: National Los Angeles Times survey.

Source: Survey by Los Angeles Times, December 1-19, 1978.

BUT SOME SAID NO

Question: Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: No more nuclear power plants should be built in this country until questions about safety are resolved, even though this will mean energy shortages within ten years.



Source: Survey by NBC News/Associated Press, September 19-20, 1978.

OPINION ROUNDUP

PUBLIC SAW RISKS BEFORE THREE MILE ISLAND BUT WAS AMBIVALENT ABOUT DANGERS

Question: There are differences in opinion about how safe atomic energy plants are. Some people say they are completely safe, while others say they present dangers and hazards. How do you feel—that it would be safe to have an atomic energy plant somewhere near here, or that it would present dangers? (Roper)

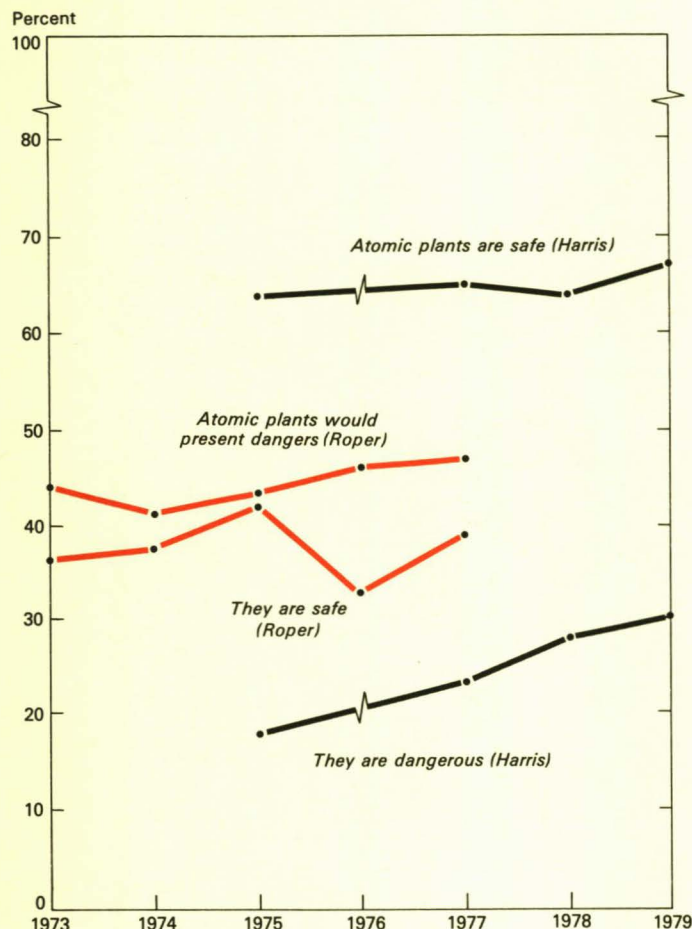
Question: All in all, from what you have heard or read, how safe are nuclear power plants that produce electric power . . . very safe, somewhat safe, or not so safe? (Harris)

Safety or risk of nuclear power plants					
Roper	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977
Safe	36%	37%	42%	33%	39%
Dangers	44	41	43	46	47
Don't know	23	22	15	21	14

Harris	1975	1977	1978	1979
Safe	64%	65%	64%	67%
Not safe	18	23	28	30
Not sure	18	12	8	3

Note: Safe = very safe/somewhat safe, not safe = not so safe/dangerous (volunteered).

Source: Surveys by Roper Organization, latest that of September 24-October 1, 1977; Surveys by ABC/Louis Harris and Associates, Inc., latest that of April 4-7, 1979.



In the wake of the nuclear plant failure at Three Mile Island, there is renewed interest in what Americans really think about nuclear power. At this point, as shown by the survey data printed here, only a few conclusions may be drawn confidently. One of these is that the public is highly ambivalent about atomic energy.

This ambivalence is not new. In 1948, only 42 percent of Americans were confident that "in the long run, atomic energy will do more good than harm." Most polls in the 1970s, prior to Three Mile Island, showed a majority in favor of building more nuclear power plants, but all surveys have found at least a large minority of the public against construction of more plants. Throughout the 1970s, according to surveys by the Roper Organization, large numbers of Americans were sensitive to the dangers of nuclear power.

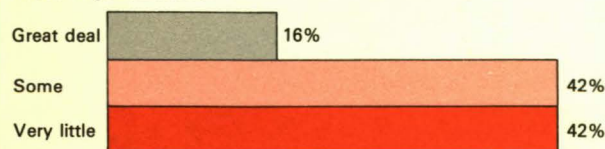
Today, the public is more skeptical about nuclear energy than it was prior to the Pennsylvania accident—but we simply do not know whether there will be a persisting shift in opinion. Americans are concerned with safety and environmental questions involving nuclear energy, but at the same time they want a continuing supply of reasonably priced electricity. The resulting ambivalence is the decisive feature of current opinion.

Everett C. Ladd, Jr.
Consulting Editor
Opinion Roundup

AND DOUBTED BOTH FRIEND AND FOE

Question: How much trust do you have in what the *government* tells you about the risks of nuclear power? (Read list) How much trust do you have in what the *opponents of nuclear power* tell you about the risks of nuclear power? (Read list)

Trust in government



Trust in opponents

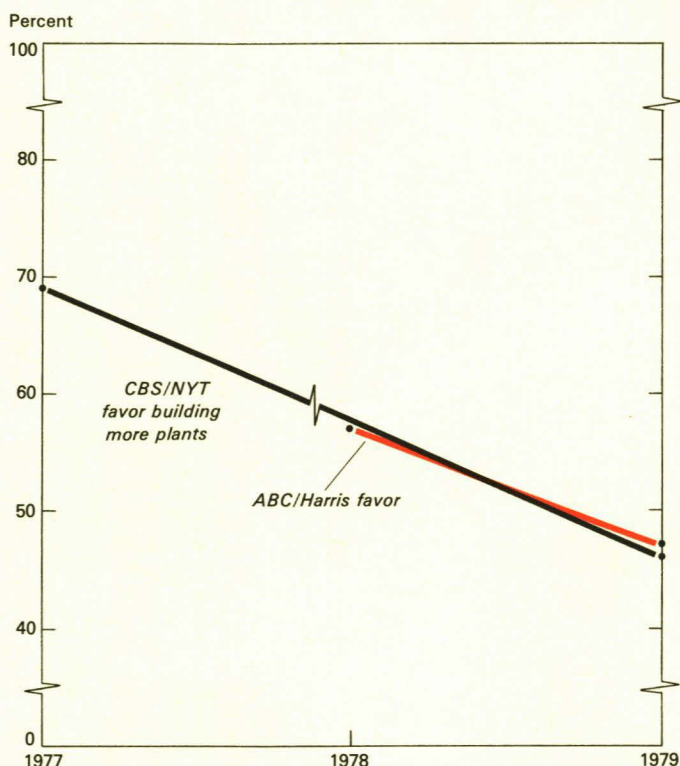


	Great deal	Some	Very little
Government	16%	42%	42%
Opponents	8	51	41

Source: Survey by Bureau of Social Science Research, conducted for Resources for the Future, July 7-August 10, 1978.

The Aftermath of Three Mile Island

SUPPORT DROPS ... BUT NO CORE MELTDOWN



Question: Would you approve or disapprove of building more nuclear power plants to generate electricity? (CBS/NTT)

Question: In general, do you favor or oppose the building of more nuclear power plants in the United States? (ABC/Harris)

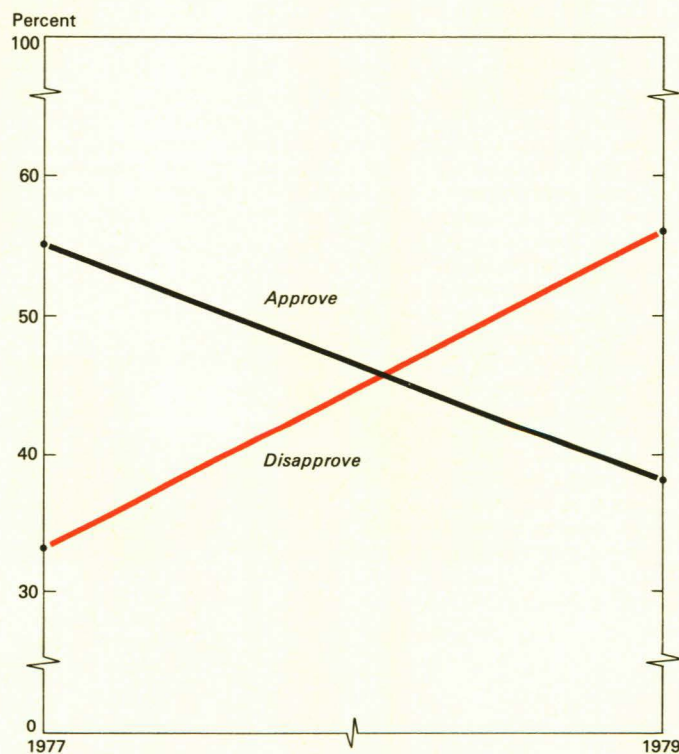
	1977	1978	1979
CBS/NTT Favor	69%	—	46%
ABC/Harris Favor	—	57%	47

Source: Surveys by CBS News/*New York Times*, latest that of April 5-7, 1979; surveys by ABC News/Louis Harris and Associates, latest that of April 6-9, 1979.

DON'T BUILD IN MY BACKYARD

Question: Would you approve or disapprove if the nuclear plants for generating electricity are built in your community?

	1977	1979
Approve	55%	38%
Disapprove	33	56

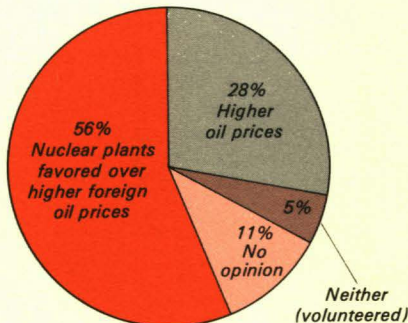


Source: Surveys by CBS News/*New York Times*, latest that of April 5-7, 1979.

OPINION ROUNDUP

NUCLEAR POWER BETTER THAN HIGHER OIL PRICES

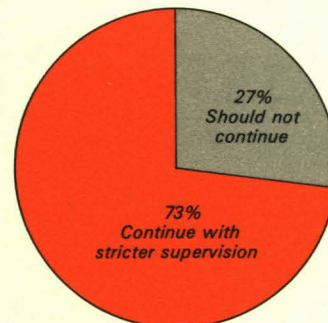
Question: There are risks and problems in using any source of power—problems like air pollution, higher prices, dependence on foreign countries, and possible radioactivity. If you had to choose, would you rather . . . build more nuclear power plants or pay higher prices for foreign oil?



Source: Survey by CBS News/New York Times, April 5-7, 1979.

BUT TIGHTEN SAFETY

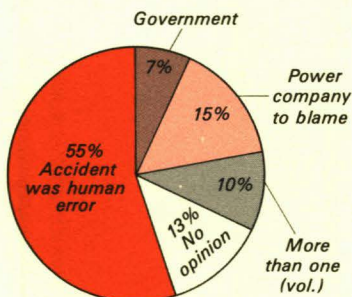
Question: Considering the accident in that Pennsylvania nuclear power plant, do you approve or disapprove of the following policies . . . ? The federal government should allow the forty-four more nuclear power plants now planned, but should supervise their construction more strictly than has been the case up to now.



Source: Survey by ABC News/Louis Harris and Associates, April 6-9, 1979.

PUBLIC BLAMES THREE MILE ISLAND ON HUMAN ERROR . . .

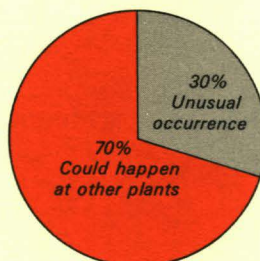
Question: Who or what do you think is most to blame for the accident—poor supervision by the government, careless operations by the power industry, or was it just human error?



Source: Survey by CBS News/New York Times, April 5-7, 1979.

THINKS IT COULD HAPPEN AGAIN . . .

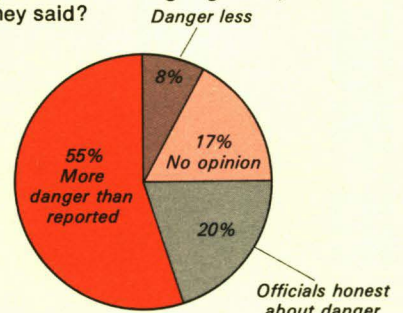
Question: Do you feel that what happened at that Pennsylvania nuclear plant could happen at any of the other nuclear power plants in the United States, or do you think an unusual series of things went wrong there that are extremely unlikely to happen in other nuclear plants?



Source: Survey by ABC News/Louis Harris and Associates, April 6-9, 1979.

QUESTIONS WAY IT WAS HANDLED

Question: Do you think public officials have been honest in telling the public all they know about the danger from the accident, or was the danger greater, or less than they said?

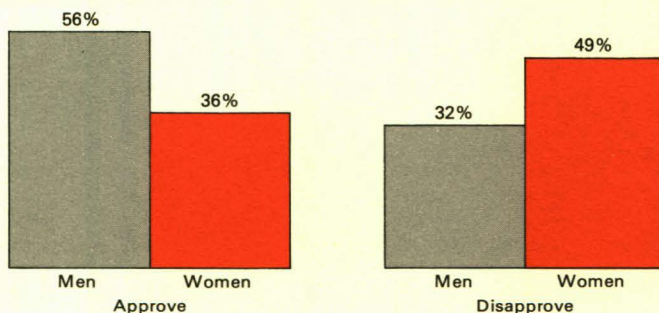


Note: In this poll, respondents indicated public officials should tell all they know about the dangers (57 percent) whereas 38 percent favor keeping back information.

Source: Survey by CBS News/New York Times, April 5-7, 1979.

SPLITTING THE ATOM SPLITS THE SEXES

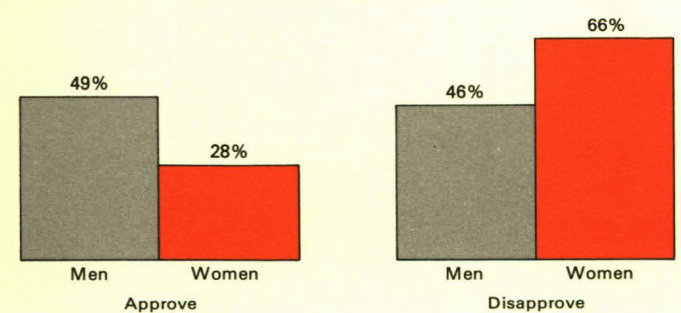
Question: Would you approve or disapprove of building more nuclear power plants to generate electricity?



	Men	Women
Approve	56%	36%
Disapprove	32	49

Source: Survey by CBS News/New York Times, April 5-7, 1979.

Question: Would you approve or disapprove if the nuclear plants for generating electricity are built in your community?



	Men	Women
Approve	49%	28%
Disapprove	46	66

Source: Survey by CBS News/New York Times, April 5-7, 1979.

Political Institutions: Some Changes Wanted

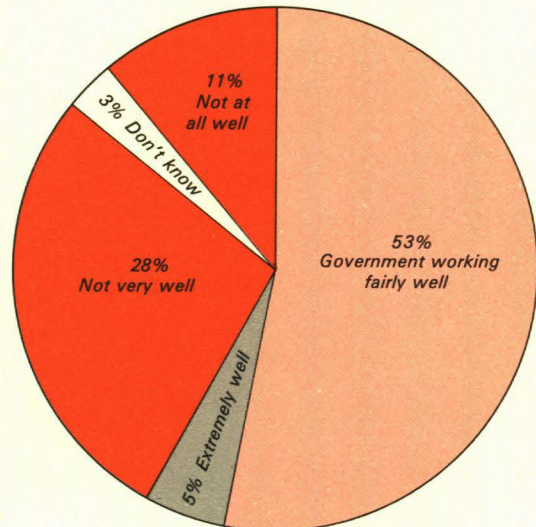
Americans are not at all happy these days with the way "our system of government" is performing. Most people are not inclined to go to the barricades, but only a small number—perhaps 5 percent of the people—give high marks to the government generally and to its principal units like the Congress.

In this climate of general dissatisfaction, there is unprecedented support for a diverse set of changes involving political institutions and processes. Thus, as shown here, majorities of Americans now say they favor amending the U.S. Constitution to provide for national referenda or initiatives, want to amend the Constitution to require that Congress balance the budget each year, feel the Electoral College should be abolished, and favor limits on the term of U.S. senators and representatives. Some of the proposed changes may be desirable, others harmful. From the standpoint of public opinion, the key factor is the generalized dissatisfaction with the current governmental performance and the generalized support for the institutional change.

Everett C. Ladd, Jr.

HOW WELL DOES GOVERNMENT WORK?

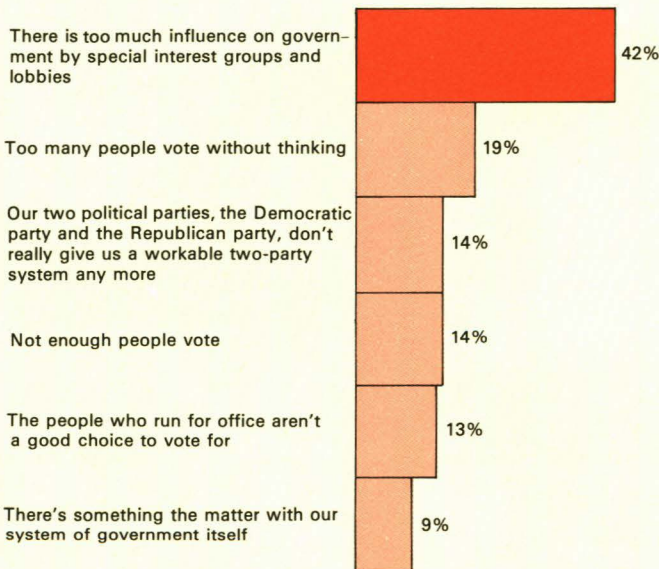
Question: How well do you think our system of government is working these days—extremely well, fairly well, not very well, or not at all well?



Source: Survey by the Roper Organization, conducted for the Public Broadcasting Service, October 16-22, 1978.

AND WHAT CAUSES PROBLEMS

Question: Which of these reasons, if any, do you think is the main reason our system of government doesn't work better than it does? (Hand respondent card) (Asked only of the respondents who think government system working less than extremely well = 92%.)

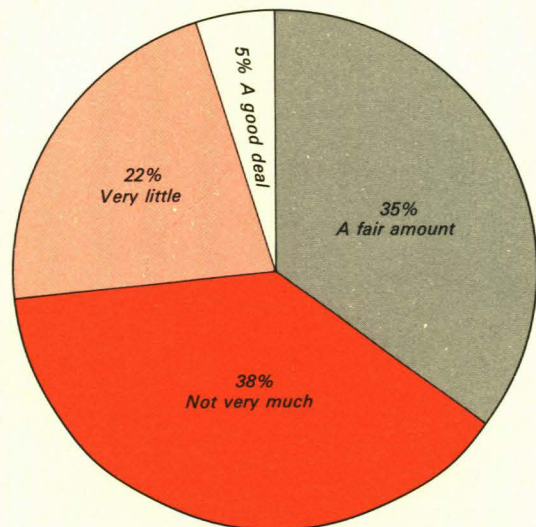


Note: Categories not shown include none (volunteered) 1% and don't know 3%. Multiple responses per respondent.

Source: Survey by the Roper Organization, conducted for the Public Broadcasting Service, October 16-22, 1978.

AND WHAT ABOUT CONGRESS

Question: There are a great many problems that need to be solved in this country today—inflation, energy supplies, crime, etc. Here is a list of a number of types of government leaders and groups who have responsibility in helping solve these problems. (Card shown respondent) We'd like to know how much you think is being accomplished by each of them. How much would you say is being accomplished by Congress in solving our problems—a good deal, a fair amount, not very much, or very little?



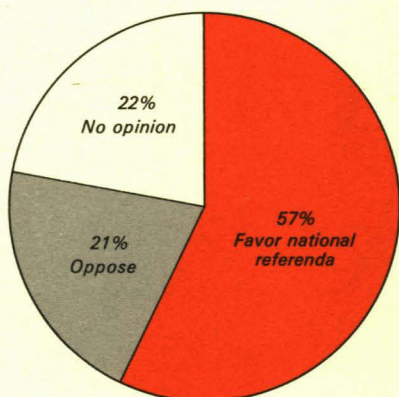
Source: Survey by the Roper Organization (Roper Report 78-7), July 8-15, 1978.

The Changes Favored

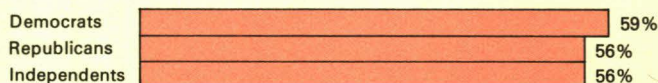


FAVOR NATIONAL REFERENDA

Question: The U.S. Senate will consider a proposal that would require a national vote—that is, a referendum—on any issue when 3 percent of all voters who voted in the most recent presidential election sign petitions asking for such a nationwide vote. How do you feel about this plan—do you favor or oppose such a plan?



Favor by Party Identification

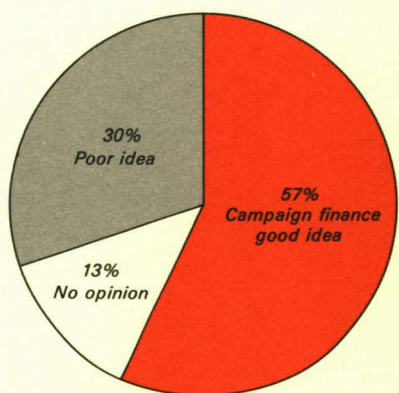


Source: Survey by American Institute of Public Opinion (Gallup), January 6-9, 1978.

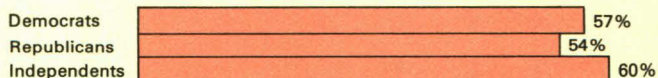


FAVOR FEDERAL CAMPAIGN FINANCING

Question: It has been suggested the federal government provide a fixed amount of money for the election campaigns of candidates for Congress and that all private contributions from other sources be prohibited. Do you think this is a good idea or a poor idea?



Good Idea By Party Identification



Note: In a comprehensive survey by Civic Service, Inc., results showed 67% disapproved of public financing versus 22% registering approval.

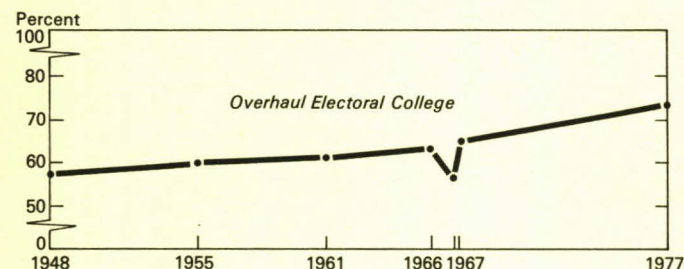
Source: Surveys by American Institute of Public Opinion (Gallup), February 2-5, 1979.



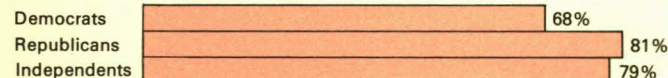
FAVOR POPULAR VOTE FOR PRESIDENT

Question: Today, the presidential candidate who gets the most popular votes in a state takes all the electoral votes of that state. Do you think this should or should not be changed so that each (of the candidates/candidate) would receive the same proportion of electoral votes that he gets in the popular vote? This would mean, for example, that if a candidate gets two-thirds of the popular vote in a state, he would get two-thirds of the electoral vote in that state. (1948, 1955, 1961)

Question: Would you approve or disapprove of an amendment to the Constitution which would do away with the Electoral College and base the election of a president on the total vote cast throughout the nation? (1966-1977)



Approval by Party Identification (1977)



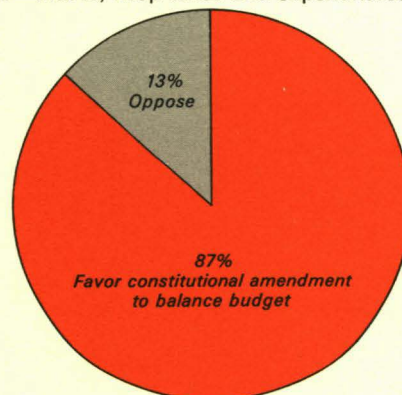
Note: 1948-1961, Approval="should be changed."

Source: Surveys by American Institute of Public Opinion (Gallup), latest that of January 14-17, 1977.

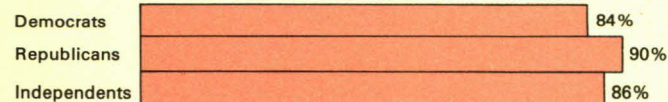


FAVOR CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT TO BALANCE BUDGET

Question: Would you favor or oppose a constitutional amendment that would require Congress to balance the federal budget each year—that is, keep taxes and expenditures in balance?



Favor by party identification



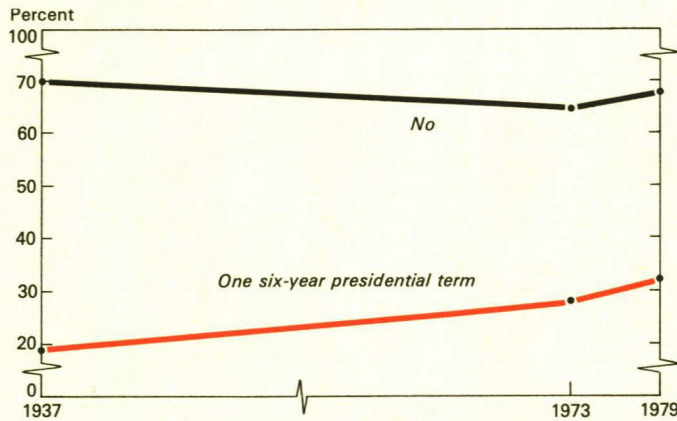
Source: Survey by American Institute of Public Opinion (Gallup), February 2-5, 1979.

OPINION ROUNDUP

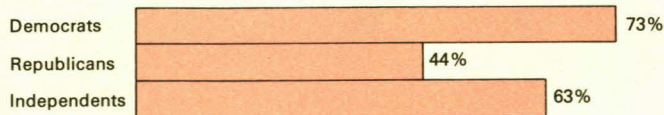


OPPOSE SIX-YEAR PRESIDENTIAL TERM

Question: Would you favor changing the term of office of the president to one six-year term with no reelection?



Favor by party identification



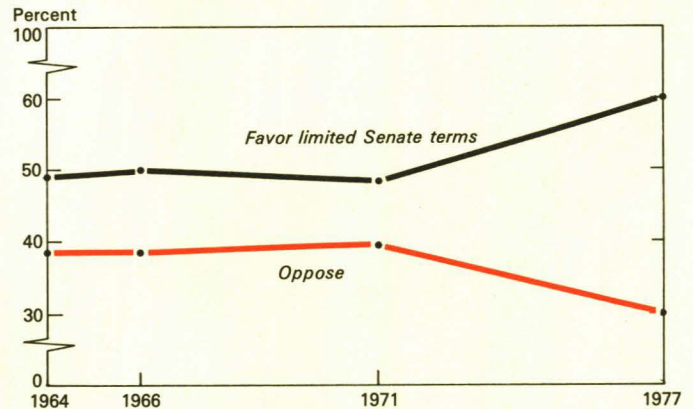
	1937	1973	1979
Yes	19%	28%	32%
No	70	64	68
No opinion	11	8	—

Source: Surveys by American Institute of Public Opinion (Gallup), latest that of May 4-7, 1979.



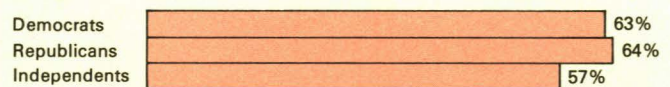
FAVOR LIMITED SENATE TERMS

Question: A law has been proposed which would limit a senator to two terms, or a total of twelve years in office. Would you favor or oppose such a law?



	1964	1966	1971	1977
Favor	49%	50%	48%	60%
Oppose	38	38	39	30
No opinion	13	12	13	10

Favor by Party Identification (1977)

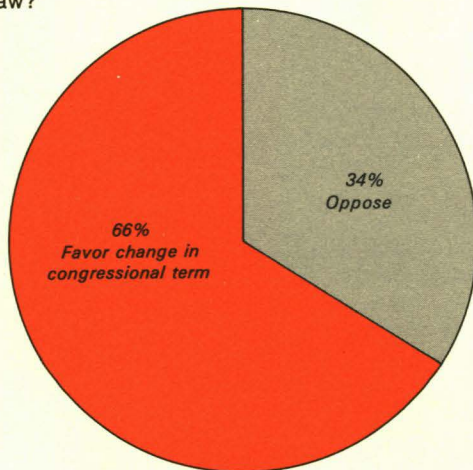


Source: Surveys by American Institute of Public Opinion (Gallup), latest that of November 4-7, 1977.

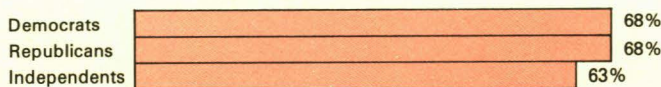


FAVOR CHANGE IN CONGRESSIONAL TERMS

Question: A law has been proposed which would limit a member of the House of Representatives to three terms of four years apiece, or a total of twelve years. Would you favor or oppose such a law?



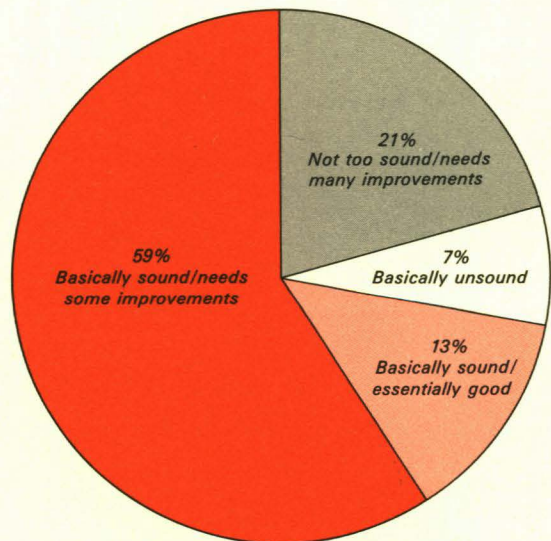
Favor by party identification



Source: Survey by American Institute of Public Opinion (Gallup), November 4-7, 1977.

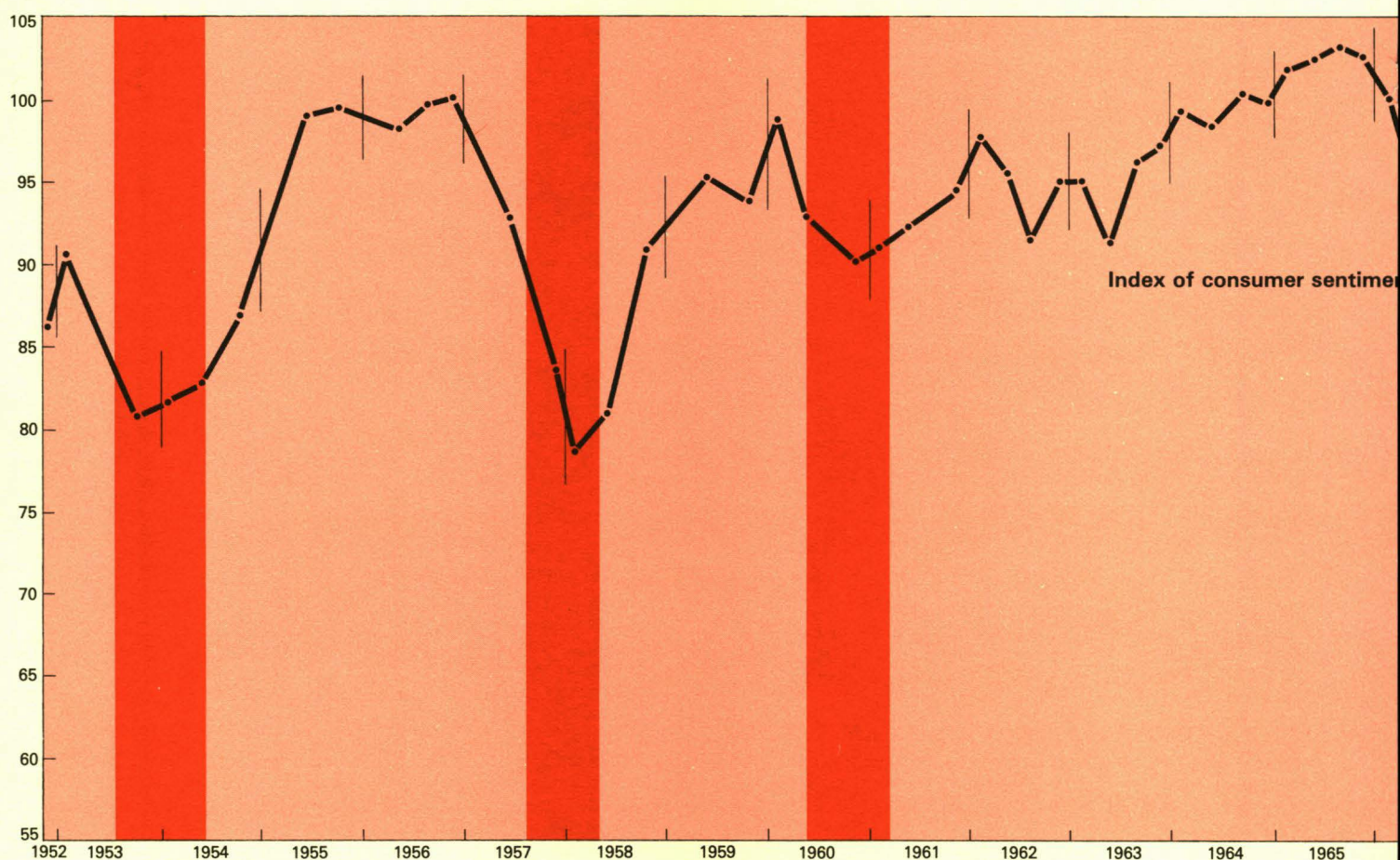
SYSTEM BASICALLY SOUND

Question: Now, I'd like to ask you about four specific aspects of American life: our political system, our system of administering justice, our system of business and industry, and our system of organized labor. First, our political system. Which of these descriptions do you feel best applies to our political system? (Card shown respondent)



Source: Survey by Roper Organization (Roper Reports, 77-3), February 12-16, 1977.

More Bad News on



MICHIGAN INDEX OF CONSUMER SENTIMENT

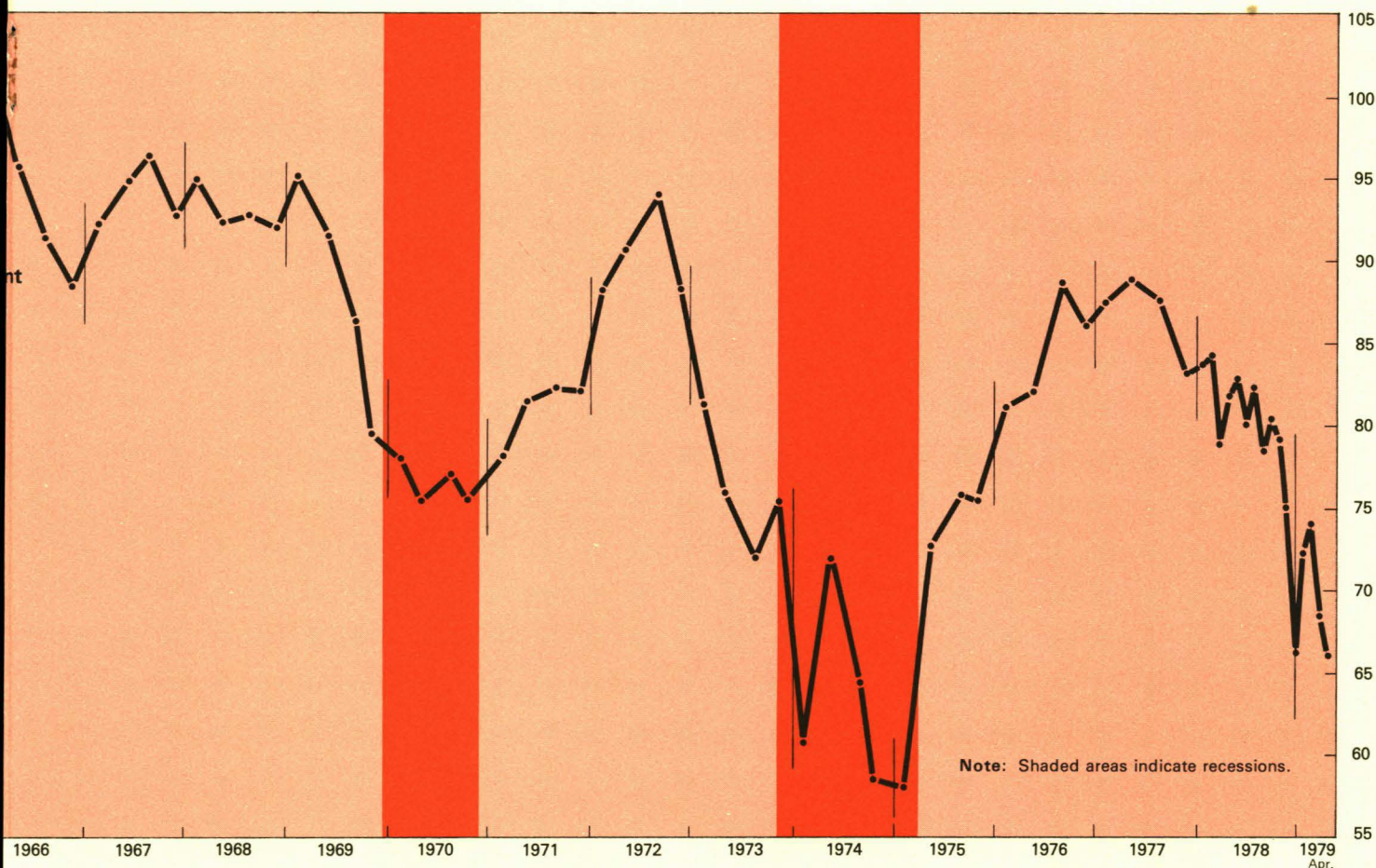
The Consumer Sentiment Index is a composite number which takes into account the answers to a series of questions:

1. Would you say that you and your family are better off or worse off financially than you were a year ago?
2. Now, looking ahead—do you think that a year from now you and your family will be better off financially, or worse off, or just about the same?
3. Now, turning to business conditions in the country as a whole—do you think that during the next twelve months, we'll have good times financially or bad times, or what?
4. Looking ahead, which would you say is more likely—that in the country as a whole, we'll have continuous good times during the next five years or so, or that we will have periods of widespread unemployment, or depression, or what?
5. About the big things people buy for their house—I mean furniture, home furnishings, refrigerator, stove, television, and things like that. In general, do you think now is a good time or a bad time to buy such household items?

Note: For data prior to 1962 the base is Fall 1956 = 100. In 1962 and later years, the base is February 1966 = 100, a date selected because the index value on the old base happened to be 100 in February 1966, thus linking the two sets of data.

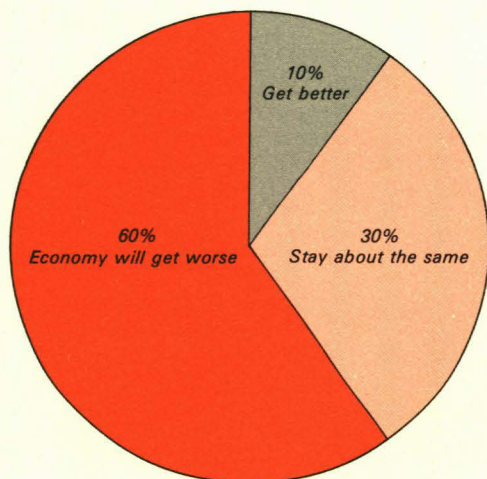
Source: Survey by Survey Research Center, University of Michigan, latest that of April 1979.

n the Home Front



FOR THE ECONOMY

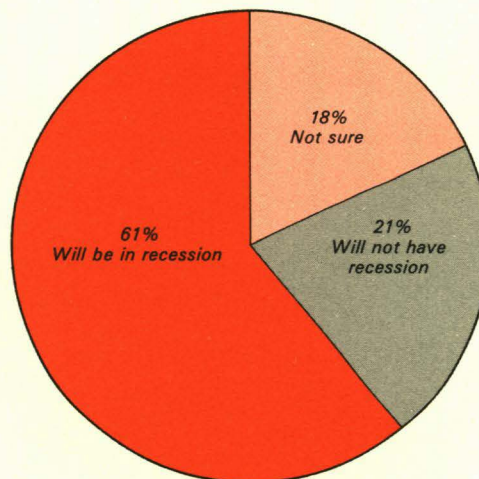
Question: During the next year, do you think the economy will get better, get worse, or stay about the same?



Source: Survey by NBC News/Associated Press, April 30-May 1, 1979.

FOR RECESSION IN OUR FUTURE

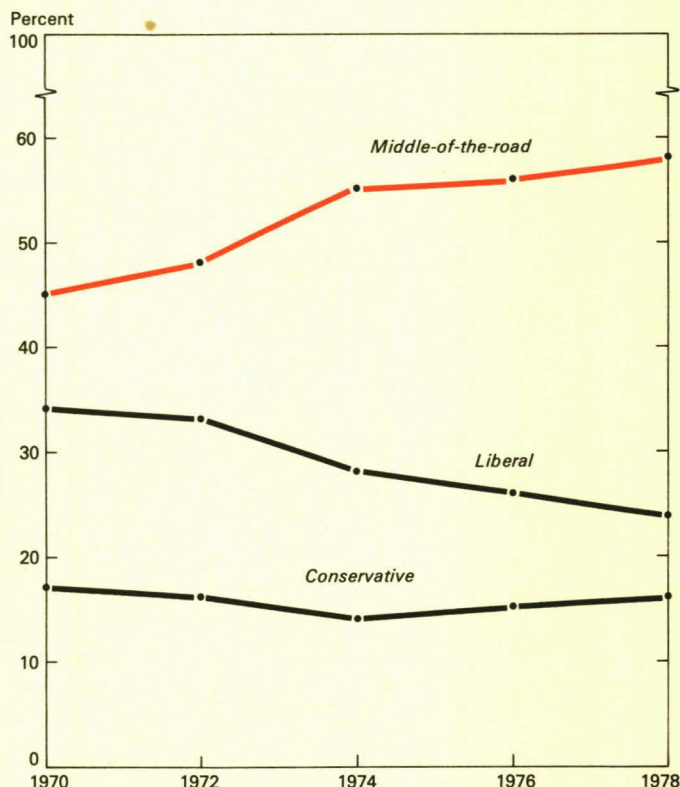
Question: A year from now, do you feel the country will be in a recession or not?



Source: Survey by ABC News/Louis Harris and Associates, March 22-27, 1979.

College Students:

THE CAMPUSES: HOW CONSERVATIVE?



Question: How would you characterize your political views (Mark one): far left, liberal, middle-of-the-road, conservative, far right?

	Political Preference				
	1970	1972	1974	1976	1978
Far left	3%	2%	2%	2%	2%
Liberal	34	33	28	26	24
Middle-of-the-road	45	48	55	56	58
Conservative	17	16	14	15	16
Far right	1	1	1	1	1

Source: Surveys by the Cooperative Institutional Research Program of the Laboratory for Research on Higher Education, UCLA and the American Council on Education, latest that of 1978 (Astin Study). Survey of first-year college students only.

POLITICS PASSE

Question: Indicate the importance to you personally of each of the following: (Mark one for each item) . . . Essential, very important, somewhat important, not important . . . Keeping up to date with political affairs.

	1966	1970	1974	1976	1977	1978
Essential/very important	58%	53%	37%	37%	40%	37%

Source: Surveys by the Cooperative Institutional Research Program of the Laboratory for Research on Higher Education, UCLA and the American Council on Education, latest that of 1978 (Astin Study). Survey of first-year college students only.

DOES THE SYSTEM WORK?

Question: Please indicate (the extent of) your agreement or disagreement with each of the following statements. (Mark one circle for each item): Strongly agree, agree with reservations, disagree with reservations, strongly disagree . . . meaningful social change cannot be achieved through traditional American politics.

	Meaningful social change cannot be achieved through politics	
	1969	1975
Agree	54%	43%
Disagree	46	56

Note: Agree = strongly agree and agree with reservations.

Source: Surveys by Survey Research Center, University of California at Berkeley for the Carnegie Council on Higher Education, 1969; Survey Research Center, University of California at Berkeley sponsored by the Carnegie Council, 1975.

RETURN TO LAW AND ORDER

Question: Mark one in each row . . . Disagree strongly, disagree somewhat, agree strongly, agree somewhat: There is too much concern in the courts for the rights of criminals.

	1970	1974	1976	1977	1978
Agree strongly/ agree somewhat	52%	52%	60%	64%	65%

Note: Agree = agree strongly/agree somewhat.

Source: Surveys by the Cooperative Institutional Research Program of the Laboratory for Research on Higher Education, UCLA and the American Council on Education, latest that of 1978 (Astin Study). Survey of first-year college students only.

STUDENTS NIX BUSING

Question: Please indicate (the extent of) your agreement or disagreement with each of the following statements. (Mark one circle for each item): Strongly agree, agree with reservations, disagree with reservations, strongly disagree . . . racial integration of the public elementary schools should be achieved even if it requires busing.

	Racial integration even if busing required	
	1969	1975
Agree	44%	26%
Disagree	56	74

Note: Agree = strongly agree and agree with reservations.

Source: Surveys by Survey Research Center, University of California at Berkeley for the Carnegie Council on Higher Education, 1969; Survey Research Center, University of California at Berkeley sponsored by the Carnegie Council, 1975.

The Sixties Have Surely Ended

In the 1960s, according to the popular view, "radicalized" students protested with wild abandon and turned universities into centers promoting all sorts of social and political change. Now at the end of the 1970s, the campuses are quiet and "conservatized." Students want only to study hard, get good grades, and land jobs. How accurate is this picture?

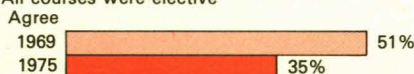
Thanks to surveys conducted by the Laboratory for Research on Higher Education at UCLA together with the American Council on Higher Education and by the Carnegie Council on Higher Education, we have an abundance of reliable data, some of which are displayed here. As these charts show, students of the late seventies are less politically active than they were a decade ago. They take more conservative stands on most national political issues. They are markedly less inclined to back experimentation and change in campus matters. Grades, core curricula, and the like are "in" again. Perhaps in response to economic uncertainty, students have become more "careerist." But as Daniel Yankelovich pointed out in *The New Morality*, the "liberalization" in lifestyles and cultural values that occurred in the 1960s has not been reversed at all, and many of these newer values find widespread student support. On the whole, the movement in student opinion mirrors that which has occurred within the public at large.

Everett C. Ladd, Jr.

BACK TO BASICS

Question: Please indicate (the extent of) your agreement or disagreement with each of the following statements. (Mark one circle for each item): Strongly agree, agree with reservations, disagree with reservations, strongly disagree . . . Undergraduate education in America would be improved if:

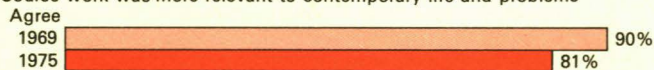
All courses were elective



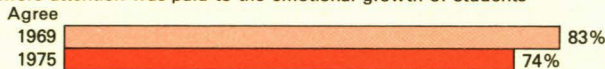
Grades were abolished



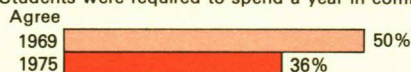
Course work was more relevant to contemporary life and problems



More attention was paid to the emotional growth of students



Students were required to spend a year in community service in the U.S.



Note: Agree = strongly agree and agree with reservations.

Source: Surveys by Survey Research Center, University of California at Berkeley for the Carnegie Council on Higher Education, 1969; Survey Research Center, University of California at Berkeley sponsored by the Carnegie Council, 1975.

TWO-FOUR-SIX-EIGHT . . .

Question: Please indicate (the extent of) your agreement or disagreement with each of the following statements. (Mark one circle for each item): Strongly agree, agree with reservations, disagree with reservations, strongly disagree . . . Student demonstrations have no place on a college campus.

	1969	1975
Agree	29%	37%
Disagree	71	64

Note: Agree = strongly agree and agree with reservations.

Source: Surveys by Survey Research Center, University of California at Berkeley for the Carnegie Council on Higher Education, 1969; Survey Research Center, University of California at Berkeley sponsored by the Carnegie Council, 1975.

DOWN WITH THOSE WHO DEMONSTRATE

Question: Please indicate (the extent of) your agreement or disagreement with each of the following statements. (Mark one circle for each item): Strongly agree, agree with reservations, disagree with reservations, strongly disagree . . . Students who disrupt the functions of a college should be expelled or suspended.

	1969	1975
Agree	64%	72%
Disagree	36	27

Note: Agree = strongly agree and agree with reservations.

Source: Surveys by Survey Research Center, University of California at Berkeley for the Carnegie Council on Higher Education, 1969; Survey Research Center, University of California at Berkeley sponsored by the Carnegie Council, 1975.

CASH IS COOL

Question: Indicate the importance to you personally of each of the following: (Mark one for each item) . . . Essential, very important, somewhat important, not important . . . Being very well off financially.

	1966	1970	1974	1976	1977	1978
Essential/ very important	44%	39%	46%	53%	58%	60%

Source: Surveys by the Cooperative Institutional Research Program of the Laboratory for Research on Higher Education, UCLA and the American Council on Education, latest that of 1978 (Astin Study). Survey of first-year college students only.

AND HORATIO ALGER LIVES

Question: Indicate the importance to you personally of each of the following: (Mark one for each item) . . . Essential, very important, somewhat important, not important . . . Being successful in a business of my own.

	1966	1970	1974	1976	1977	1978
Essential/ very important	53%	44%	38%	45%	47%	48%

Source: Surveys by the Cooperative Institutional Research Program of the Laboratory for Research on Higher Education, UCLA and the American Council on Education, latest that of 1978 (Astin Study). Survey of first-year college students only.

If the Sixties Have Ended, What Do the Seventies Say?

STUDENTS' VIEWS OF PRE-MARITAL SEX

Question: Mark one in each row . . . Disagree strongly, disagree somewhat, agree strongly, agree somewhat: If two people really like each other, it's all right for them to have sex, even if they've known each other only for a short time.

Pre-marital sex O.K.



	1974	1976	1977	1978
Agree strongly/ agree somewhat	46%	49%	50%	49%

Note: Agree = agree strongly/agree somewhat.

Source: Surveys by the Cooperative Institutional Research Program of the Laboratory for Research on Higher Education, UCLA and the American Council on Education, latest that of 1978 (Astin Study). Survey of first-year college students only.

FAMILIES ARE IMPORTANT

Question: Indicate the importance to you personally of each of the following: (Mark one for each item) . . . Essential, very important, somewhat important, not important . . . Raising a family.

Families are important



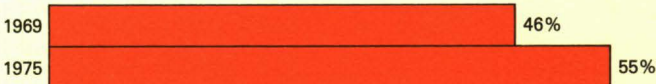
	1970	1974	1976	1977	1978
Essential/ very important	68%	55%	57%	59%	62%

Source: Surveys by the Cooperative Institutional Research Program of the Laboratory for Research on Higher Education, UCLA and the American Council on Education, latest that of 1978 (Astin Study). Survey of first-year college students only.

NEW HIGHS FOR MARIJUANA

Question: Please indicate (the extent of) your agreement or disagreement with each of the following statements. (Mark one circle for each item): Strongly agree, agree with reservations, disagree with reservations, strongly disagree . . . marijuana should be legalized.

Agree marijuana should be legalized



	Marijuana should be legalized	
	1969	1975
Agree	46%	55%
Disagree	54	46

Note: Agree = strongly agree and agree with reservations.

Source: Surveys by Survey Research Center, University of California at Berkeley for the Carnegie Council on Higher Education, 1969; Survey Research Center, University of California at Berkeley sponsored by the Carnegie Council, 1975.

. . . AND PRE-MARITAL MARRIAGE

Question: Mark one in each row . . . Disagree strongly, disagree somewhat, agree strongly, agree somewhat: a couple should live together for some time before deciding to get married.

Favor living together



	1974	1976	1977	1978
Agree strongly/ agree somewhat	45%	49%	48%	46%

Note: Agree = agree strongly/agree somewhat.

Source: Surveys by the Cooperative Institutional Research Program of the Laboratory for Research on Higher Education, UCLA and the American Council on Education, latest that of 1978 (Astin Study). Survey of first-year college students only.

POPULATION EXPLOSIONISM IMPLODES

Question: Mark one in each row . . . Disagree strongly, disagree somewhat, agree strongly, agree somewhat: Parents should be discouraged from having large families.

Discourage large families



	1974	1976	1977	1978
Agree strongly/ agree somewhat	60%	55%	53%	48%

Note: Agree = agree strongly/agree somewhat.

Source: Surveys by the Cooperative Institutional Research Program of the Laboratory for Research on Higher Education, UCLA and the American Council on Education, latest that of 1978 (Astin Study). Survey of first-year college students only.

Note To Readers

The data in this section on college students are drawn from two major studies that have been conducted over the past decade and a half.

One was a study sponsored by the Carnegie Council on Higher Education and carried out by the Survey Research Center at the University of California, Berkeley. The Carnegie study sampled the attitudes of 70,694 undergraduate students in 1969 and 23,561 students in 1975. In compiling data from those surveys, we are happy to acknowledge our debt to the National Surveys of Higher Education, directed by Martin Trow, Oliver Fulton, and Judy Roizen.

The second study is an annual survey of college freshmen sponsored by the Cooperative Institutional Research Program at the University of California, Los Angeles and the American Council on Education. This survey is frequently called the "Astin study," after Dr. Alexander Astin, who directs it with the assistance of Margo King and Gerald Richardson. Dr. Astin is at UCLA's Laboratory for Research on Higher Education.

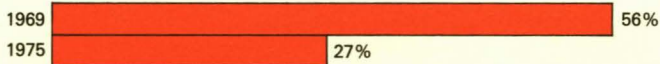
The latest Astin survey was conducted in the fall of 1978 among 187,603 full-time freshmen entering 383 institutions. It was the thirteenth annual report in the series.

OPINION ROUNDUP

COLLEGES LESS RACIST

Question: Please indicate (the extent of) your agreement or disagreement with each of the following statements. (Mark one circle for each item): Strongly agree, agree with reservations, disagree with reservations, strongly disagree . . . most American colleges and universities are racist whether they mean to be or not.

Most colleges and universities are racist



	1969	1975
Agree	56%	27%
Disagree	44	72

Note: Agree = strongly agree and agree with reservations.

Source: Surveys by Survey Research Center, University of California at Berkeley for the Carnegie Council on Higher Education, 1969; Survey Research Center, University of California at Berkeley sponsored by the Carnegie Council, 1975.

DON'T RELAX STANDARDS FOR STUDENTS . . .

Question: Please indicate (the extent of) your agreement or disagreement with each of the following. (Mark one circle for each item): Strongly agree, agree with reservations, disagree with reservations, strongly disagree . . . more minority group undergraduates should be admitted to my college even if it means relaxing normal academic standards of admission.

Minority groups should be admitted even if it means relaxing standards



	1969	1975
Agree	27%	22%
Disagree	72	78

Note: Agree = strongly agree and agree with reservations.

Source: Surveys by Survey Research Center, University of California at Berkeley for the Carnegie Council on Higher Education, 1969; Survey Research Center, University of California at Berkeley sponsored by the Carnegie Council, 1975.

STUDENTS FAVOR BLACK STUDIES

Question: Please indicate (the extent of) your agreement or disagreement with each of the following. (Mark one circle for each item): Strongly agree, agree with reservations, disagree with reservations, strongly disagree . . . any institution with a substantial number of black students should offer a program of black studies if they wish it.

There should be a black studies program if substantial numbers of blacks want one



	1969	1975
Agree	88%	87%
Disagree	11	13

Note: Agree = strongly agree and agree with reservations.

Source: Surveys by Survey Research Center, University of California at Berkeley for the Carnegie Council on Higher Education, 1969; Survey Research Center, University of California at Berkeley sponsored by the Carnegie Council, 1975.

OR FACULTY

Question: Please indicate (the extent of) your agreement or disagreement with each of the following. (Mark one circle for each item): Strongly agree, agree with reservations, disagree with reservations, strongly disagree . . . the normal academic requirements should be relaxed in appointing members of minority groups to the faculty of my college.

Normal academic requirements should be relaxed in appointing minority faculty

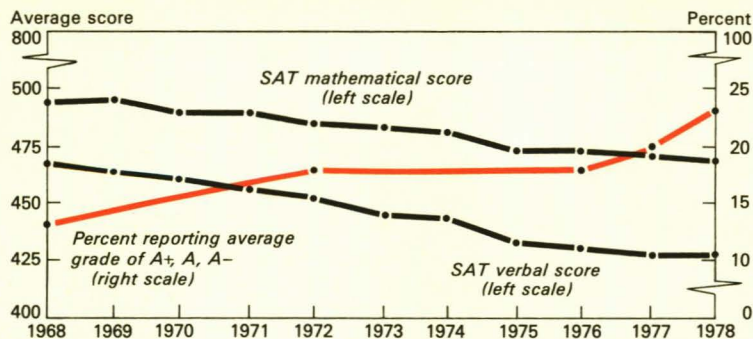


	1969	1975
Agree	24%	13%
Disagree	76	87

Note: Agree = strongly agree and agree with reservations.

Source: Surveys by Survey Research Center, University of California at Berkeley for the Carnegie Council on Higher Education, 1969; Survey Research Center, University of California at Berkeley sponsored by the Carnegie Council, 1975.

HIGH SCHOOL GRADE INFLATION AND TEST SCORE DECLINE



Source: Surveys by the Cooperative Institutional Research Program of the Laboratory for Research on Higher Education, UCLA and the American Council on Education, latest that of 1978 (Astin Study). Survey of first-year college students only. SAT scores from National Report on College Bound Seniors, 1978, of the Educational Testing Service (ETS).

SAT Score Averages for College Bound Seniors, 1968-1978

	Mathematical	Verbal
1968	492	466
1969	493	463
1970	488	460
1971	488	455
1972	484	453
1973	481	445
1974	480	444
1975	472	434
1976	472	431
1977	470	429
1978	468	429

Percent reporting A grades in High School

Year	Percent
1968	14%
1972	18
1976	18
1977	20
1978	23

The Draft: An Idea Whose Time Has Come, Gone, and Come Again?

Compulsory military service, which is once again under consideration in the Congress, has been a recurring issue in public opinion polls as well as public policy debates for more than three decades.

During the 1930s, polls of the time show, most Americans opposed the draft. But with World War II, a large majority decided that the draft was necessary; and this majority support persisted over the forties, fifties, and sixties. The most notable change of opinion was the growing belief in the 1960s, that the draft—as then constituted—was unfair.

In the 1970s, given the Vietnam experience and the sense of unfairness, Americans endorsed the shift to a volunteer army.

But over the last half decade the public has become increasingly of the opinion that the volunteer recruitment system is not working well. Today, there is overwhelming support for requiring that young men be registered so that a draft could be re-instituted in times of emergency. The idea of some form of universal service, which has long been popular, is endorsed by a clear majority of the public. And about half the populace is now prepared to bring back the draft itself—at least for men. Not surprisingly, young people are more resistant than their elders to reinstatement of the draft or establishment of some form of universal service.

Everett C. Ladd, Jr.

1939-1969: Majority Supports Draft; Questions of Fairness Arise

Questions

1939—Do you think every able-bodied young man 20 years old should be made to serve in the army or navy for one year? (yes, no)

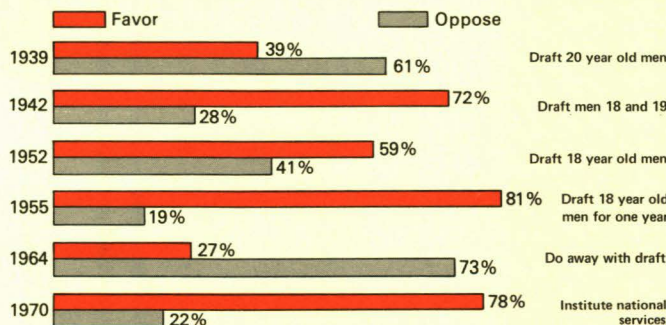
1942—Would you approve or disapprove of drafting young men 18 and 19 years old for the armed forces now? (approve, disapprove)

1952—Should 18 year olds who have finished high school be drafted or not? (should, should not)

1955—Would you favor or oppose requiring every able-bodied young man in this country, when he reaches age 18, to spend one year in military training? (favor, oppose)

1964—Do you think the time has come when this country should do away with the draft and depend upon professional military forces made up of volunteers, or do you think the draft should be continued? (professional military training, continue the draft)

1970—Congress is now considering a proposal to replace the Selective Service System—that is, the draft—with a National Service System: Under this system a young man of 18 could choose to do any one of these three things: (1) He could volunteer for military service, (2) he could volunteer for civilian service—for example, helping in hospitals, teaching school, working in programs like VISTA, or (3) he could take his chances on being drafted. How does this plan sound to you—would you like to have your congressman vote for or against this proposal? (for, against)

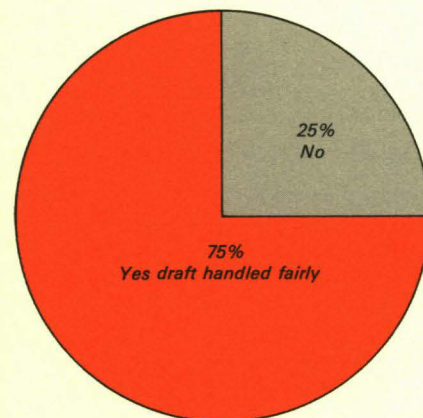


Note: A variety of different Gallup questions are displayed here. Readers should be aware that different issues are being tapped.

Note: Don't know/no opinion excluded for comparison purposes.
Source: Surveys by American Institute of Public Opinion (Gallup), latest that of June 1970.

1943

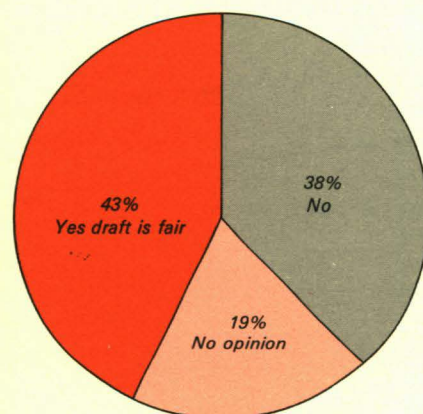
Question: Do you think the draft is being handled fairly in your neighborhood?



Source: Survey by American Institute of Public Opinion (Gallup), December 1943.

1966

Question: Do you think the present draft system is fair or not?



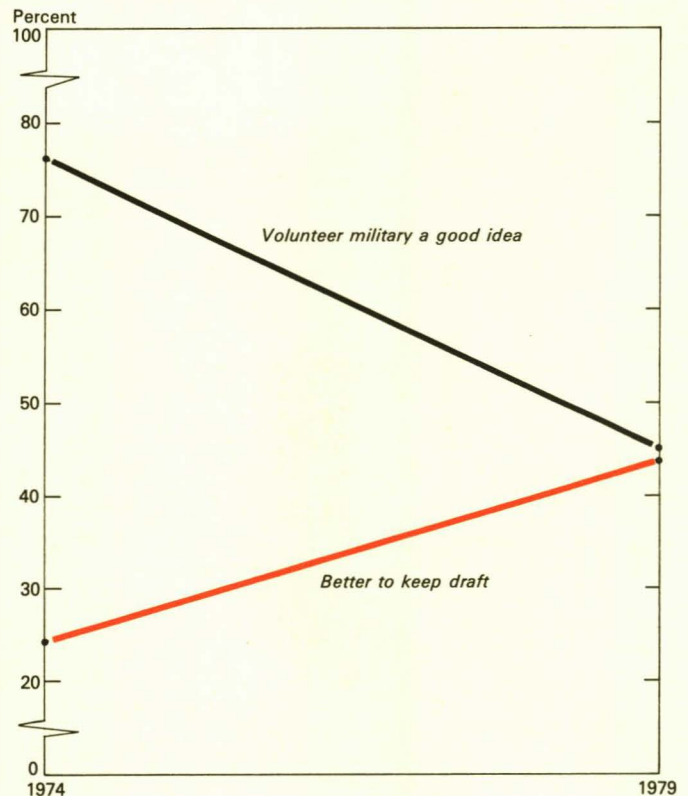
Source: Survey by American Institute of Public Opinion (Gallup), June 1966.

THE 70's, Public First Welcomed Volunteer Force; But Now Harbors Second Thoughts

VOLUNTEER MILITARY LOSES GROUND

Question: On another subject, in 1972 the draft was ended, and we now man the armed services by volunteers. How do you feel about this—that this has been a good thing, or that it would be better if we had kept the draft? (1974)

Question: In 1972 the draft was ended, and we now man the armed services by volunteers. How do you feel about this—that this has been a good thing, or that it would be better if we had kept the draft? (1979)



	Switching to volunteers good	Better to have kept draft
1974	76%	24%
1979	45	43

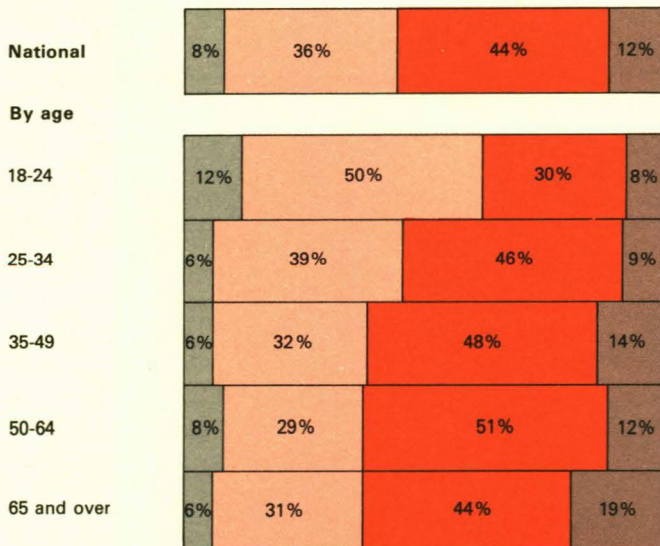
Note: In the 1979 Roper survey, 12% volunteered the response that the country should use "volunteers in peacetime, draft in war."

Source: Surveys by the Roper Organization (Roper Report 79-4), latest that of March 24-31, 1979.

NOT SEEN TO BE WORKING WELL

Question: How well do you think the volunteer recruitment system for the armed forces is working? Would you say it's working very well, pretty well, or not well at all?

Very well ☐ Pretty well ☐ Not well at all ☐ Not sure ☐



Source: Survey by NBC News/Associated Press, February 5-6, 1979.

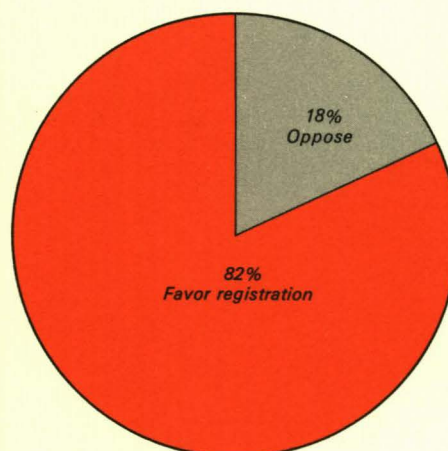


C. P. Houston/The Register and Tribune Syndicate Inc.

TODAY: Strong Support for Registration; Growing Support for Draft

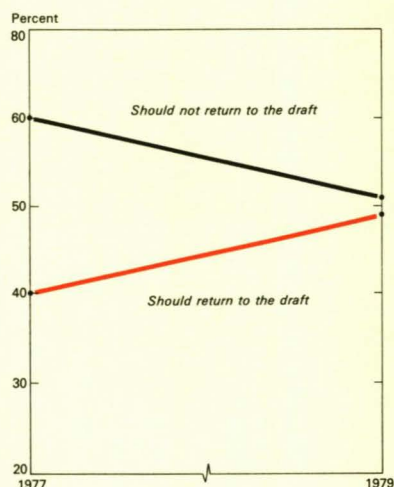
REGISTRATION OF MEN FAVORED

Question: Would you favor or oppose the registration of the names of all young *men* so that in the event of an emergency the time needed to call up *men* for a draft would be reduced?



Note: Young adults 18-24 responded favor 78%, oppose 22%.
Source: Survey by the American Institute of Public Opinion (Gallup), March 2-5, 1979.

DRAFT GAINING GROUND



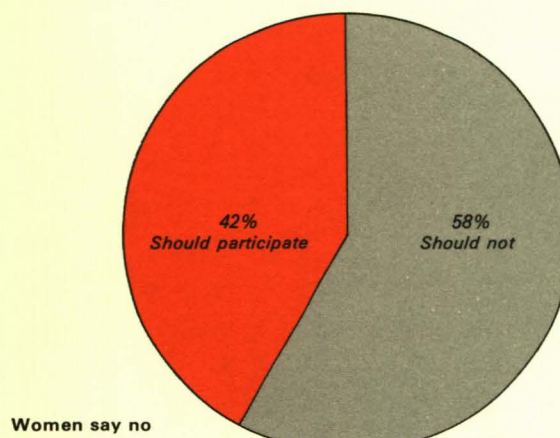
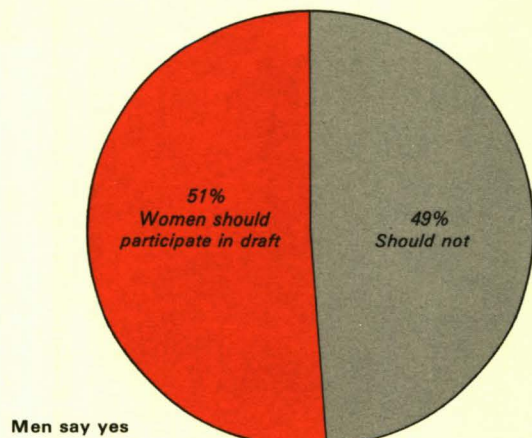
Question: As you may know there is no longer a military draft and those who serve in the armed forces are volunteers. Recently, however, the armed forces have had trouble in getting enough volunteers to meet manpower needs. Do you think we should return to the draft at this time or not?

	Should return to draft	Should not return to draft
(National)		
1977	40%	60%
1979	49	51

Source: Surveys by the American Institute of Public Opinion (Gallup), latest that of March 2-5, 1979.

SHOULD WOMEN SERVE?

Question: If a draft were to become necessary, should young women be required to participate as well as young men, or not?



Source: Survey by the American Institute of Public Opinion (Gallup), March 2-5, 1979.

OPINION ROUNDUP

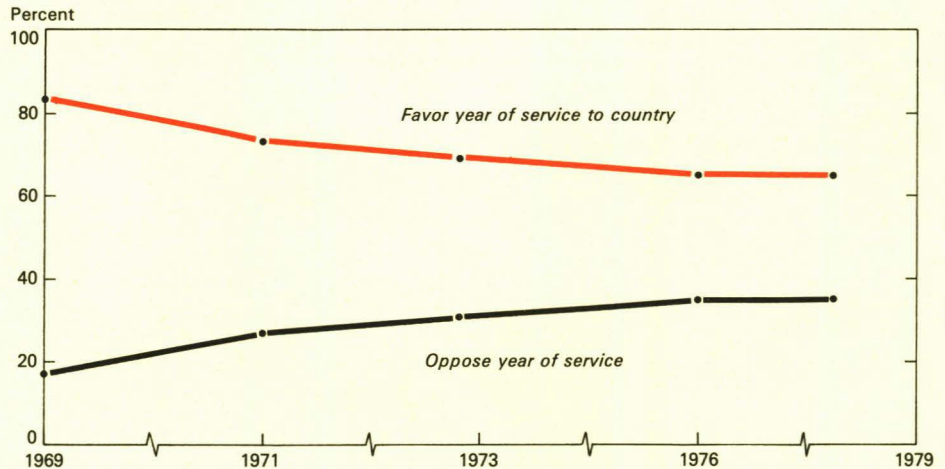
THUMBS UP ON UNIVERSAL SERVICE

Question: Would you favor or oppose requiring all young men to give (a/one) year of service to the nation—either in the military forces, or in non-military work here or abroad, such as VISTA or the Peace Corps?

	Favor	Oppose
January 1969	83%	17%
December 1971	73	27
October 1973	69	31
December 1976	65	35
March 1979	65	35

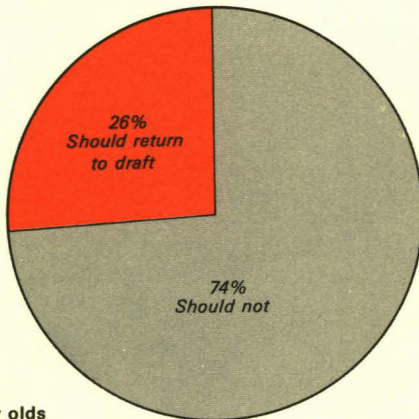
Note: In 1979 the response of young adults 18-24 years old was 45% favor, 55% oppose.

Source: Surveys by the American Institute of Public Opinion (Gallup), latest that of March 2-5, 1979.

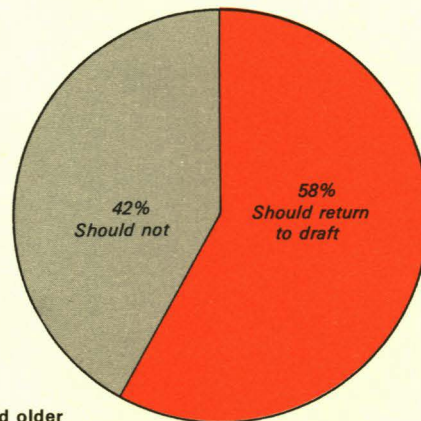


GENERATION GAP ON DRAFT...

Question: As you may know there is no longer a military draft and those who serve in the armed forces are volunteers. Recently, however, the armed forces have had trouble in getting enough volunteers to meet manpower needs. Do you think we should return to the draft at this time, or not?



18-24 year olds

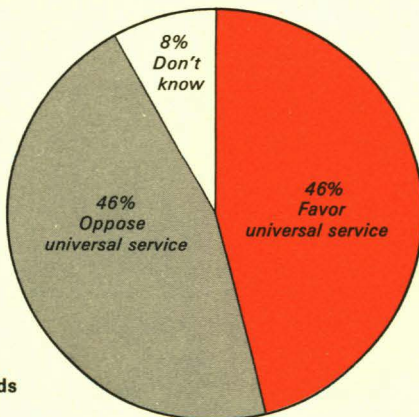


50 and older

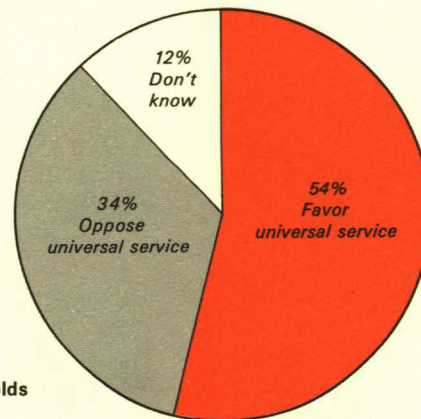
Source: Survey by the American Institute of Public Opinion (Gallup), March 2-5, 1979.

... AND UNIVERSAL SERVICE

Question: Some people have proposed a program of universal service for young people in this country where some would have to go into the army, some into the Peace Corps and some young people would have to work in hospitals and other public service programs in the United States. Would you favor or oppose such a program?



18-24 year olds



50-64 year olds

Note: National response = favor 52%, oppose 37%, not sure 11%.

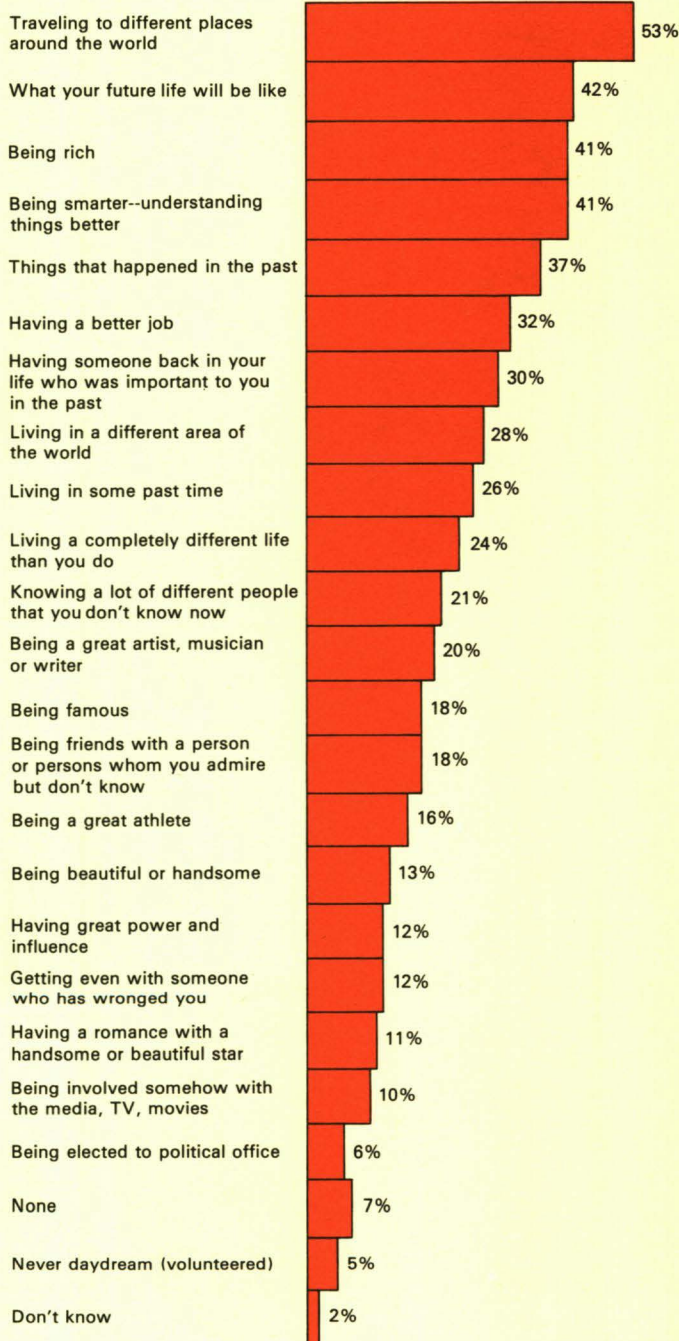
Source: Survey by NBC News/Associated Press, February 5-6, 1979.

OPINION ROUNDUP

WHAT DAYDREAMS ARE MADE OF . . . AND THE REAL WORLD

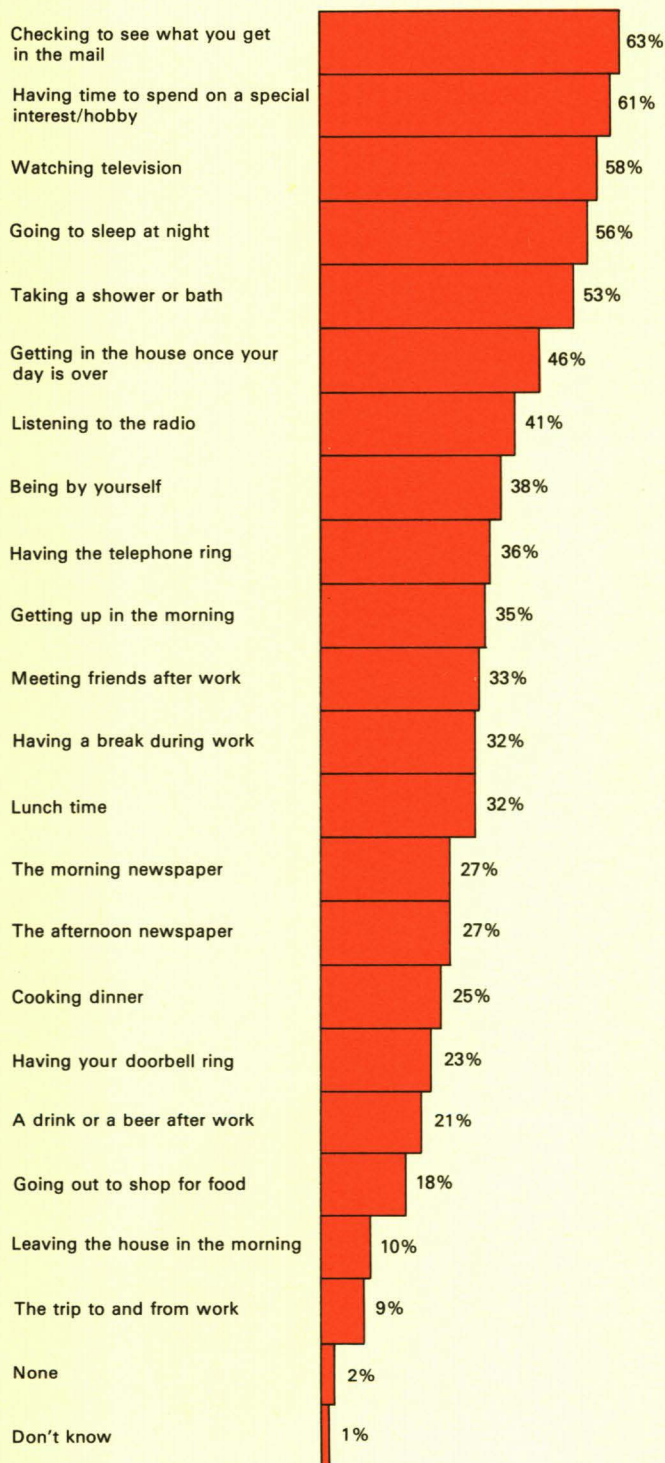
Question: Most people spend at least a small part of their waking hours daydreaming and thinking about different things. Some of those daydreams may be complete flights of fancy, others just simple, like a hungry person thinking about lunch-time.

Here's a list of some things people might be expected to daydream about from time to time. (Card shown respondent) Could you look it over and call off the things, if any, that you ever daydream or think about? Just call off the letters.



Source: Survey by the Roper Organization (Roper Report 79-3), February 10-24, 1979.

Question: We all have activities and responsibilities that make up our daily lives. We look forward to some of them; others we don't look forward to at all. Would you read down this list of activities and call off the ones, if any, that you usually enjoy or look forward to during the day? (Card shown respondent.)



Source: Survey by the Roper Organization (Roper Report 79-1), December 2-9, 1978.

AS THE WORLD TURNS... RIGHT?

A Conversation with Howard R. Penniman and Richard M. Scammon

Introduction

Over the past 5 years, there have been more than 100 different national elections around the world. What do they tell us, if anything, about international political and social trends?

*To answer that question, editors of Public Opinion met recently with two of the leading authorities on voting in other nations. Dr. Howard Penniman, resident scholar at AEI, is the editor of an ongoing AEI series of studies that have now analyzed more than thirty separate elections in twenty-two nations. Richard Scammon, a visiting fellow at AEI, is director of the Elections Research Center, a leading expert in comparative elections research, and co-author of *America Votes and The Real Majority*. Excerpts from conversations with Messrs. Penniman and Scammon follow below.*

Ben Wattenberg: *It is well known that election experts have predicted seven of the last three major social trends in the world. With that potential land mine in front of us, we would like to ask whether something that we have seen in the United States—the so-called move to the right—is a phenomenon that is now apparent around the world. What cross-national trends do you gentlemen see and what do those trends mean? Howard?*

Howard Penniman: Looking around the world, the striking fact is that in recent years, there is almost no instance in which the left has improved its position in a national election. The left has been reelected in West Germany and it has been reelected in some of the Scandinavian countries, though in each case with a smaller margin than in the preceding election.

But the significant fact is how much better the right has been doing. In Britain, we have just seen the solid victory of Mrs. Thatcher, a victory that some have called the most significant electoral shift there since the end of World War II. In Spain, the conservative government has recently been reelected with a slightly increased margin, even though the polls were predicting quite the contrary. In France, the conservatives did very well in the spring of 1978, better in fact than the same par-

ties had done in 1974. In the recent election in Canada, the Progressive Conservatives picked up forty-one seats, although they did not win a majority.

There are a whole series of other countries where these same sorts of things have happened. Israel moved sharply to the right in its last election, switching from a Labor government to Begin and the Likud party. In Finland, the only party to pick up seats in the last election was conservative, and in Sweden, there was also a shift to the right. In Venezuela, voters shifted support from the Social Democrats to a Christian Democratic group.

Wattenberg: *Are there any examples in recent years of the lefter party doing any better than they had done?*

Penniman: Yes, the left party made gains in New Zealand in 1978, but did not come to power. It also did better in Japan in the general election of 1976, but the fact is that the conservatives have just done remarkably well in the past few weeks in the governorship contests, sufficiently well that the conservative party, which is officially called Liberal, will probably call for new elections by early fall to take advantage of what they see as a swing to the right.

David Gergen: *Recent reports in the press suggest that in several countries*



"In recent years, there is almost no instance in which the Left has improved its position in a national election."

PENNIMAN

the left is showing greater strength at the local and regional levels than at the national level. Is that the case?

Penniman: One can easily be misled because the big city results tend to get headlines. In Spain, for example, the left did carry the big cities, but they carried most of the big cities even in the general elections, though by a smaller margin. Nationally, Spain went to the conservatives. In France and Italy, the socialists won in the cantonal elections, but I wouldn't get very excited by them.

No Flags for the Flagpole?

Wattenberg: *My question to you, Mr. Scammon, is what does all this mean?*

Richard Scammon: Frankly, not very much.

Let me take the four major powers of Europe, plus Japan. The fact is that France is almost dead even between the left and the right, as these last elections indicated and as the presidential elections indicated before. In Germany, the leading party, the Christian Democratic Union, and the government coalition (Free Democrats and Social Democrats) are about even.

In Italy, Christian Democratic control goes back, of course, almost to the earliest postwar period and still remains, but elections are due there to see if that may change.

In Britain, there hasn't been a majority popular vote for anybody since the end of the war. Every election has been less than 50 percent Tory, less

than 50 percent Labour, whatever it may be. That remains true today since Mrs. Thatcher won with some 43.9 percent of the popular vote.

In Japan, because of a peculiar electoral system, the Liberal Democrats who, as Howard points out, are the conservative party, manage to hold authority.

Just as we see in the United States, one would go too far if you were to imply that there has been a major electoral shift in any of these countries. Our last congressional elections in 1978, as a matter of fact, were similar to what we see in Europe and Japan: namely, a slight movement to the right, within the center, but certainly nothing that could be trumpeted and run up the flagpole. It just isn't there.

Wattenberg: *Let's not talk about the subject just in terms of elections and parties; let's talk about it in terms of voter sentiment, attitude and political mood. Again, I wouldn't blow it out of proportion and perhaps it is not monumental, but there seems to be a sense in many of those countries that the bloom is off the rose of the welfare state. Is that true?*

Scammon: I am not really sure that I would want to agree with that. To say the bloom is off the welfare state is fair; to conclude, therefore, that the welfare state is withering on the vine is wrong. I think we arrive at the answer that you and I, Ben, came to ten years ago about the United States, namely that people want the center. Or as Irving Kristol said a few months ago in this magazine, what America really wants and what the world probably really wants is a conservative welfare state.

Inflation: The Conservative Engine

Wattenberg: *Howard, do you buy all that moderation?*

Penniman: Not quite, although there is much in what he says. It seems to me that one does have to take into account the Proposition 13s. While people do want to get their assistance from government, they also—and this is important—want to reduce taxes, and they are prepared to make some sacrifices, maybe of other people's welfare, in order to save their taxes. Part of this is because inflation bites particularly into middle-class people and probably

more than almost any other issue, it mobilizes them as it did in Proposition 13.

Inflation is international, of course, and on the whole the right has done better with inflation than the left has done. Where it has not, the right has nonetheless survived. In Australia, for example, the left party, Labor, lost in 1975 after it was faced with all sorts of other internal problems as well as inflation. The Liberals, the more conservative party, came into power and inflation continued to rise. But in 1977, despite their inability to slow inflation, the Liberals won again and by a very considerable margin.

* * *

Scammon: In discussing election trends, it is always possible to find special cases. Consider the last election in Israel. Certainly the long term in office of the majority party, Mapai, as well as corruption charges against it, contributed to its defeat. So, the question arises, was the election of the Likud party a real move to an ideological right? In fact, was Begin really on the ideological right? Those are nice questions.

Looking to Britain, if anybody is going to get credit for the victory of Mrs. Thatcher, it should be the trade unions because they pushed it that way.

Again and again, what you find is that there tend to be local circumstances and situations that help to explain election results. Howard mentioned Proposition 13. The voting on Proposition 13 was almost dead even up to about two or three weeks before the vote was taken in June of 1978. The great increase in taxes on real property turned that whole thing around. It is difficult for me to say that such elections reflect a strong swing to the ideological right.

Gergen: *But is there not some significance in the fact that in France, the government has moved to a much stronger capitalistic system? And that in Israel, they have moved toward less wage and price controls and fewer government restrictions on the economy? And that Mrs. Thatcher is proposing a reduction of the welfare state?*

Scammon: It is true that no matter why more conservative people reach office, once they get there they may very well

do things like Mrs. Thatcher would do. There may, in fact, be a shift to the right in public policy, but in reality that shift may be more than voters truly want.

Gergen: *You are saying, then, that local situations help to bring conservatives into office without necessarily being a mandate for conservative rule.*

Scammon: That is exactly right. For example, what was the mandate in Nixon's election over McGovern in '72 in this country? It was anti-McGovern. It wasn't very strongly pro-Nixon.

Wattenberg: *But that is a profound ideological statement to say that it was anti-McGovern.*

Scammon: Yes, in that it was a rejection of left wing activism. But it was not a great demand for conservative action on the part of the government. It was more a vote for the center.

The Moving Center

Wattenberg: *Coming back to our ancient game, is the center moving? Is that what is happening?*

Scammon: The center is always moving.

Wattenberg: *But is it moving in an ideological direction?*

Scammon: No, I think it is moving sideways.

Wattenberg: *Sideways to the right?*

Scammon: No, no, I wouldn't say that. Let me take a specific case in point from American experience. I would say that the center is moving toward more regulation in terms of nuclear accidents, and toward less regulation in terms of seat belts, saccharin, and things of this sort.

In the four major countries of Western Europe that I spoke of, I have just never found any evidence of a significant move to the right. Now, maybe with Mrs. Thatcher, we will suddenly find great changes in the way the country is governed. But even in Scandinavia, when the Conservatives win, it is the old story: The Conservatives are alleged to be the best Social Democrats the Social Democrats ever elected, just as Callaghan was the best conservative premier Britain has had in years, or

Schmidt is the best Christian Democrat the Social Democrats elected, this sort of thing.

Wattenberg: *Or Carter is the most conservative Democrat we have had.*

Scammon: Exactly.

Most of these so-called ideological shifts really move things, say, between the forty-yard lines, or even between the forty-five-yard lines. Things do move and there are changes, but they are twofold. The first is a relatively minor change, right to left, left to right. The other is perhaps a more important change in which the whole center moves, and the whole society moves to accept concepts, ideas, theories, courses of action, which we wouldn't have accepted a generation ago.

Wattenberg: *Well at the moment, on the economic side, there certainly seems to be a movement in the United States, toward a more conservative position with less willingness to embark on new economic programs and more willingness to cut back on taxes—or at least to pay lip service to those ideas. Social mores are moving to a more open society—one that we could hardly conceive of twenty years ago—but in economic and fiscal matters, the movement is to the right.*

A Muddled Mood

Gergen: *I would like to return to an earlier question. To the extent that there has been a shift in attitudes toward the right on the question of the welfare state, why has it occurred? Has it resulted from the economic stress of the seventies? Have people concluded that the welfare state costs too much and causes stagnation? What do you think the public is saying?*

Scammon: I think the welfare state is pretty well accepted. There are, of course, some excesses that people find objectionable. The perfect American example would be the compulsory use of seat belts in automobiles. This is a typical example of interference with the right of the individual which people reject. The present arguments about saccharin would be another. There may also be a moving away from what you might call the "Don't throw any more money at it" syndrome.

On the other hand, the basic role of the government as the guarantor of various goodies has not been denied,



"Most ideological shifts really move things between the forty-yard lines, or even the forty-five-yard lines."

SCAMMON

and as a matter of fact, may well be in the position of being expanded in the whole of Western Europe and North America.

Wattenberg: *Then why is it that the most popular political slogan in American life today is, "Isn't it about time we got the government out of our hair?"*

Scammon: I don't think that is the most popular slogan. An equally popular slogan is "Gee, there must be a program for me somewhere." [Laughter.]

Let me give you a case in point. In 1976, Mr. Ford, the conservative candidate, carried every state of the American West except Hawaii, which is a special case. Within months after his defeat, many of the Westerners who supported him were coming to Washington because of the drought, looking for money, federal assistance, and help, and all the rest.

The fact of the matter is that for every case of, say, deregulation of the airlines, you can find another case which involves people looking for assistance.

The very nature of a democratic society to a degree means that you have got to come up with programs and proposals. You can't go down and not enact any legislation. If you enact legislation, what you are likely to enact is legislation that is going to help somebody, that is going to get them as voters, and if you help somebody, it is likely to be an economic program that costs money.

Let me reemphasize that I do not see

a deep change in the minds of the American people. As we have found so many times in survey research work, the same person can say, "Get the damn government off my back," and in the next breath, can say, "Gee, we ought to have a program to do so and so."

Coca-Colanization of Politics

Wattenberg: *Between the two of you, you have observed elections in as many democracies—*

Penniman: And some non-democracies.

Wattenberg: *Yes, and some non-democracies—as have been observed by any two people in the history of this planet. Within those democracies, at least, as you see this process working, do you get the sense that people in this circumstance are basically the same, that they react similarly, or are their individual cultures so different that if an American suddenly plunked himself down in India or Germany or Japan or Israel, that he just would not feel familiar phenomena occurring?*

Penniman: He would have some initial problems of getting used to different kinds of ballots cast under different kinds of circumstances, but those are the simple things. Beyond that, he could probably acclimate himself very quickly.

Scammon: There is another thing that happens. The communications techniques are so well perfected now that the exchange of information about how to run campaigns and how to win elections tends to become universalized amongst the democracies. For example, public opinion poll-taking has just swept over the whole democratic world in the last generation.

I remember a favorite campaign pose in this country was a picture of the candidate with his coat slung over his shoulder, looking out over a body of water, patting a dog on the head, you know, and it said, "Scammon Cares." [Laughter.] The last place I saw this very ad was in a Finnish newspaper published in Swedish, and there the candidate was, his coat over his shoulder—

Penniman: The Communist party leaders in Spain had their pictures on posters everywhere showing the same kind

of thing. They were very middle class in appearance and style.

Gergen: *And those are the techniques that David Garth and John Deardourff took to Venezuela, too. They are becoming internationalists.*

Wattenberg: *This is the Coca-Colanization of politics.*

Penniman: Just as the supermarket has moved around the world, so has the supermarket of politics.

Wattenberg: *But to get back to my original question, it has only been working because it apparently taps some universal sentiments.*

Penniman: Exactly right.

Scammon: One of my colleagues went to Austria to observe an election, and he went to a typical Christian party rally with a two-hour speech and all that. Afterwards, he went up to the candidate and said, "Look, why don't you stand out at the door like the pastor at the church and shake hands with people?" "Oh, that is an interesting idea." So, he did. It was successful, he immediately changed his whole campaign technique, because the instinctive need of the people for something more than a two-hour lecture on the nature of the world around us, "to press the flesh," as Johnson used to put it, was just very real. And these ideas can be exchanged a good deal more freely now than they were, say, 100 years ago.

Scammon: One cannot doubt that one of the reasons for Sadat's success is that he has learned this better than most.

Gergen: *In fact, he imported a Western journalist to help him with his techniques of communication.*

Scammon: Well, he learns rapidly. I will tell you that.

Democracy: Vital Signs Still Strong

Wattenberg: *We have heard so much about the retreat of Western values and the advance of totalitarianism. Is democracy alive and well in the world today?*

Scammon: In my view, democracy really has flourished; it has not been abandoned. You can find exceptions in fringe areas, which really never enjoyed

democracy any more than, for example, Tsarist Russia did. But where the democratic idea and spirit has taken real root, I have seen it under no great danger.

Penniman: Actually, one could make a case even stronger than that because certainly Portugal and Spain have moved from authoritarian regimes toward democratic governments, and I see some reason to be hopeful that trend will continue, particularly in Spain.

The same thing is true in Venezuela, where over the past two decades the country has acquired a comfortable freedom. They have shifted now between the two major parties in each of the last three elections.

Scammon: To take an even larger case, look at the whole development of post-war Japan, which moved from a quasi-authoritarian emperor system of the pre-World War II days to a democratic kind of arrangement today.

Penniman: India would be another excellent case. Recovering from a brief authoritarian period, it came back very strongly.

Scammon: In fact, India might be the prime case because it went to a democratic system from British control. Then it was challenged by the Indira Gandhi period. Now it has recovered. It had enough democratic strength so that it could throw off that virus and come back and flourish.

Wattenberg: *So, neither of you would agree with this talk that, in some measure, has emanated from the neoconservative camp and that asserts that the idea of democracy—forgetting for a moment the military potency of the democracies—is eroding? Neither of you sees that?*

Scammon: It comes down to the fact that very few dictatorships have ever been willing to try a free vote. If Castro were willing to try a free election, if the Soviets were really willing to try an election, then I would have a little more faith in their capacity. But so long as they cannot exist without a gun, then I don't think there is any real prospect of non-democratic government sweeping the world. The idea of democracy itself is still a very powerful impulse in human affairs. ✓

THE BRITISH EXPERIENCE

Wattenberg: *Gentleman, now that the British election results are in and you have returned from your visits there, we would welcome your thoughts on what happened. If each of you had to describe Mrs. Thatcher's victory with a single psephological adjective, would it be monumental, massive, tiny, small, solid, big or what?*

Penniman: Of the adjectives you've mentioned so far, I'd say solid. But it was also a major turnover in seats, a major shift.

Scammon: I wouldn't call the victory "major"; I'd agree on "solid." Of course, when you turn out a cabinet that has twenty-two Labour people and replace it with a cabinet of twenty-two Conservatives, that obviously has more impact than the fact that the vote only shifted by a relatively small, modest gain.

The danger here is, as we find constantly in America, that whenever anybody loses, there is always the school of thought that comes shouting, "Oh, they are finished; the opposition is dead." The fact is that Labour is still strong; they've got plenty of members of Parliament to maintain an effective opposition. They can yell, scream, and bellow from the opposition benches. They are in a position to move back into the government at a moment's notice if something goes sour.

Penniman: We can overstate understatement, too, Dick. Barring a bomb dropping on the Conservative party headquarters when they are all meeting there, the Conservative margin in Parliament is large enough that they will be in power until they decide to come out sometime in 1984. The kind of thing that happened to Labour this spring—a vote of "no confidence" which forced an election upon Callaghan—is simply not foreseeable for the Conservatives.

Moreover, the Conservatives are less likely to have a Labour-type schism in coming years because they are less divided internally than the Labourites. So they are more likely to last out their five years not only because they are

nondivisive but because they've got an adequate majority that cannot be wiped out by a series of by-elections.

Shifting Tides?

Wattenberg: *Was this election ideological? Did it represent a shifting of the basic ideological tides of the modern world?*

Penniman: Certainly, most of the people who were talking and writing and participating in the political process saw it as a move to the right.

Scammon: Among the intellectuals and pundits, that was true. But among the rank and file, the best phrase I heard from any analyst was "The winter killed us." In other words, people got so fed up with the trade unions and what they regarded as their massively callous attitude toward the public good that they voted Labour out of office. If Callaghan had survived the no-confidence vote in Parliament and the general election had been held later in 1979—after a warm, pleasant summer—he might have won.

Gergen: *What you are suggesting, Dick, is that this election was a rejection of Labour rule rather than an embrace of Tory principles?*

Scammon: Very definitely. It is the old story in politics that it is easier to reject something you have seen which you believe is a failure than to embrace

something you haven't seen.

Wattenberg: *Dick, you view events as sort of discrete happenstances. Something happened with the unions, inflation went up, taxes became a problem, the economy is in trouble because there are no incentives. You see these as free-flowing, separate things that came together at the time of the election and are therefore not terribly ideological.*

I make the case that basically you have to give the Conservatives their due when their due is due. These are precisely the things that Conservatives have been saying for a generation—that the welfare state leads to an overabundance of union power, high taxation, government intervention, and an inflationary economy. Once they happen, it seems to me particularly ungracious of you [laughter] not to say that that represents what they said would happen—and that then becomes *de facto* an ideological change.

Scammon: I don't think the fact that they said it would happen is the thing that counts here. Callaghan might very easily have won this election if he had not had to go through this very difficult, fed-up, frustrating winter or had been able to postpone the election until the fall of 1979 so that he could have recovered from it.

This election does not represent an ideological rejection of the welfare state. People are ambivalent on that question. They are not answering the



ideological question with their votes. Nobody, for example, wants to get rid of the National Health Service in Britain. I would not even concede that people want to stop the welfare state at its present stage. What most people want from the health service is even more service, not less.

The most that one can say ideologically is that there has been a rightward trend within the center, not a victory for the political right.

Wattenberg: *Would you at least say that the center had moved slightly to the right?*

Scammon: That's fair enough, yes. You see, my problem in Britain is that this is ideological if you read the pundits. It is not ideological if you talk to the people because the people did not make an ideological judgment on socialism. What they said was, "These SOBs can't run the country."

Gergen: *Are you also saying that if the Conservative candidate had not been Mrs. Thatcher but had been a centrist or a moderate, the election results would have been much the same?*

Scammon: Yes. If the Conservatives had nominated a Wilkie type or a moderate Conservative, they would still have won.

1979 vs. 1945

Wattenberg: *Let it be noted for the record that Mr. Scammon has refused to place his surfboard on the wave of ideological history [laughter] and let us now turn to the future.*

It was said in Great Britain and here that this election was the most important in British elections since 1945, when Attlee beat Churchill. That election, at least in the psephological mythology of our time, had a great impact upon the Western democracies, pointing the way toward the idea of a social democratic future.

My question is this: Can one make the case that this election in 1979 may prove ultimately to be regarded as another symbolic fork in the road where Western society generally makes a change?

Scammon: That raises the question of what constitutes a critical election. The fact is that you don't know whether an election is critical until about five or ten years after it is held.

Penniman: That's right. We must have at least one more election before comfortably making sweeping statements.

I would also say that it will be much harder this time than in 1945 to turn the country in a new direction, especially in the economic sphere. In the 1940s, Labour came in intent upon nationalizing many industries—coal, transport, steel, and so on—and over time, they largely succeeded.

It will be very difficult for the Conservatives now to undo that past. For one thing, there isn't anybody out there to return all those industries to. They may be able to sell off council housing, but it strikes me as unlikely that they will make a dramatic move away from a controlled economy to an uncontrolled one or to private enterprise.

It is not possible in a democratic society, I think, to shift back and forth between a socialized, nationalized economy and private enterprise. The damn thing will just collapse. You might run one system, or you might run the other, but you cannot run back and forth between them without tearing the place apart.

Gergen: *Surely, it is possible to correct some of the excesses. And if Mrs. Thatcher's government reduces the level of taxation, if it encourages capital investment and a more vigorous private enterprise system, and then we see new economic growth, surely that will signify an important change in British life.*

Penniman: That's quite right, but still the changes will not be as dramatic as what we saw by Labour in the past. It will not mean returning publicly owned industries to the private sector.

Gergen: *But if she is successful initially, I would suggest that is only the first part of her agenda. Down the road, pressures would then build for more dramatic changes.*

Wattenberg: *Let me suggest another scenario. The metaphor frequently used about the nature of changing politics is that of moving the nose of an ocean liner. You can only move it a bit at a time, but in fact if you move the compass setting a couple of degrees a year, then after three or four years, the liner is moving in a different direction.*

If one adds to that notion the very fortuitous fact for the United Kingdom that the North Sea oil is coming on-

stream, we can see the possibility that within the next half decade that society will be far more successful. If so, that will be used as proof positive for the efficacy of this new-old idea, capitalism, incentive, enterprise, whatever you want to call it. Does that sound plausible?

Scammon: It would sound much more plausible were it not for the fact that Mrs. Thatcher has also inherited some very nasty problems. As you know, the inflation rate there fell substantially under Callaghan during his early years in office, but in recent months it has shot up again and wage demands are rapidly escalating. Mrs. Thatcher's major challenge in the next two years will lie with the labor unions. Until we see how well she succeeds there, it is difficult for any pundits—especially we in this room—to make grand pronouncements.

The Kennedy Counterthrust

Gergen: *Howard, looking ahead, do you see an election in any major country, including the United States, that could mean a move back to the Left?*

Penniman: No. There may be some shifts in the Italian elections, but they are likely to be marginal. I really don't see any country where a rightward government is likely to be replaced by one to the left.

Scammon: The one country where that is possible is right here in the United States because Teddy Kennedy is clearly the leader of the mainstream American Left. If he replaced President Carter in 1981, we would definitely have moved the nose of that ocean liner to the left of center.

But let me follow with this thought: in the last issue of this publication, you pointed out that support for Kennedy within the Democratic party comes from a wide spectrum, conservatives, moderates, and liberals. It's like Trudeaumania eleven years ago in Canada; the fact is that we have a general push for Kennedy where ideology, if any, becomes overlain with the asphalt of contemporary American politics. [Laughter.]

Penniman: Surely we can come up with a better metaphor.

Wattenberg: *No, on that note we can terminate the discussion.* ☐



by Ben J. Wattenberg

Uncle Jim and The Iron Lady

It was the match of a lifetime: Uncle Jim meets the Iron Lady! They're a gentleman and a lady, they spoke in those civilized English tones, everyone involved oozed tweed—but, by God, that one was a real election, an intellectual brawl of the first magnitude, and as Barry Goldwater once said, a choice not an echo.

But this time, the results were very different from Goldwater '64. For the first time in recent memory, an unashamed, unapologetic, non-center-trending, mostly unadulterated party of the ideological right-center won an election in a social democratic welfare state. It was,

I suggest, no small matter; its American and international implications will be great.

* * *

To begin, a word about the contestants, from a man who interviewed neither one of them, was in England one whole week during the latter stages of the campaign, but who watched both candidates do their electioneering, talked to voters, did some polling and some campaigning and, while doing so, had a numbing sense of America redux.

The Prime Minister, Jim Callaghan, owned a whole

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word in the journalistic arena. "Avuncular" is his property, in much the same way that "ebullient" stayed with Hubert Humphrey or "arrogant" hung for so many years on McGeorge Bundy's shoulders.

It's not a bad word for Callaghan. He is reassuring, apparently happy, self-assured, witty—everyone's favorite uncle (except that insiders say that if you cross him you might suddenly find yourself without vital organs . . .). He's quite good in the role of uncle, but not as good as one is told in advance. He is Hubert Humphrey without panache, without ebullience—preaching the English, lefter version of the Humphreyite line, which was exciting in the Fifties, moderate, sensible and progressive in the Sixties, and beginning to get tired in the Seventies.

In the campaign, Mr. Callaghan said that bad Tories would take it all away from you, that "free market forces" are dangerous and sometimes malign forces, that wealth must be redistributed, that multinational corporations are out to get you.

Mr. Callaghan, it should be understood, is regarded as—and is, in fact—a *moderate* Labourite, even, as some say, a *right-wing* or conservative Labourite. But the universal laws of politics demand that raw meat be fed to the troops. The evening I heard Sunny Jim, he was talking to party faithful in Wandsworth, a working-class district of London. And the party faithful of the British Labour party, and surely the party apparatchiks at party headquarters at Transport House, are often Socialists, almost always anti-capitalists. Decent people, mostly intelligent people, but still driven by the twin engines of class conflict and the internal contradictions of capitalism. They concede that the welfare state, nationalization, and controls, are not working too well in Britain, but the Socialist solution is more of the same. The remedy for the English disease, they seem to be saying, is the hair of the dog that bit.

But, in truth, the Left in England these days is not very enthusiastic about their politics or their economics or their island. That, I must confess, was the most surprising thing I encountered in England: there is no passion left on the Left. Talking to Labour politicians or intellectuals, one senses a gentle despair. Nothing much more works very well. The Empire is gone. The industrial base is eroded. The Germans work harder. The Taiwanese work cheaper. North Sea oil can check the erosion for a while—but the highest ground they can see is a plateau.

* * *

Now Mrs. Thatcher and her band of intellectuals are very different creatures. They may be wrong, they may be right, but in a fascinating intellectual inversion *they* are the enthusiasts, they are the people who, in the mode of the American Left of the Sixties, would like to take you to the hilltop and show you the lush tomorrows. No plateaus for them; they see Churchill's sunlit uplands and beyond that, a mountaintop.

Of course, Mrs. Thatcher's ideas and the ideas of

her court intellectuals are *old* ideas. But—who said it?—there's nothing so powerful as an idea whose time has gone and come again. Mrs. Thatcher is by Adam Smith out of John Foster Dulles, tempered to live and adjust to the welfare state, which she would not and could not dismantle, but which she distrusts. From her hilltop she sees an England where incentives squeeze out the dole, where enterprise erodes union power grown massively and in a way alien to the American union system, where opportunity yields not equality but universally higher living standards, where England moves from the sidelines of international affairs and onto the playing field, proudly shouldering a share of the military budget to defend—yes—gulp—freedom.

Of course, Mrs. Thatcher's immediate conservative prime ministerial predecessor, Ted Heath, said much the same thing in 1970 when he took office. Then, under the pressure of events and politics, he increased government spending, lost his fight with the unions, presided over a massive inflation, subsidized failing industries, cut defense budgets, and generally advanced the welfare state. Rather like Nixon.

No matter. The Conservatives say they've learned their lesson. As a man who usually prefers hilltops to plateaus—I like their style, which is Right-Center Verve.

If one is told by journalistic insiders that Jim Callaghan is avuncular dynamite on the podium, so too is one informed that Maggie Thatcher has personality problems: rigid, cold, artificial—a right wing martinet, Ronald Reagan in a skirt, by people for whom "Ronald Reagan" is an unhappy epithet.

But if Callaghan is a little less than advertised, Thatcher is substantially more in my judgment. It's true her smiles sometimes seem a learned exercise, like those horsey young women from Greenwich, Connecticut who flash all their teeth at you. But she knows her stuff, believes it, articulates it, and doesn't back down.

I attended a Thatcher press conference. Her most significant answer was directed to the most frivolous question. She was asked how she, and the Conservatives, could possibly hope to achieve a non-confrontational consensus in English political life if she, and the Conservatives, couldn't even reach agreement with the Labour party as to who would hold press conferences when.

(Author's Note: Labour and Conservative party headquarters in civilized England are both on Smith Square, perhaps a 30-second walk from one another. Traditionally, during an election period, their daily press conference schedules have been staggered to allow the press to attend one, then the other. The ideal time is 9:30 a.m., late enough to allow the journalists a civilized breakfast, early enough to catch a story in the high circulation P.M. dailies, and, of course, time enough to process film for the telly.)

Well, Mrs. Thatcher said, I'm a reasonable and pleasant woman. (An important point, because she was often depicted as neither.) I have tried to be rea-

sonable on this issue, she said. We have offered to stagger our press conferences with Labour, she noted. *But they have refused.* They have said they'll go at 9:30 a.m. every morning. Now, I'm a reasonable and pleasant woman, *but I won't be shoved around.* So we'll continue to brief at 9:30 a.m. thank you. Next question.

I won't be shoved around. That was not her official slogan, but it might have been. She won't be shoved around by Labour's press office policy. She won't be shoved around by the Russians or by Rhodesian Marxist-terrorists. And, by God, if you haven't figured out the code yet, she won't be pushed around by what she sees as "union wreckers" or by armies of high-taxing government bureaucrats!

The Russians were kind enough some years ago to dub her "the Iron Lady" and she has had the wits to accept the appellation. England needs an Iron Lady, she told her countrymen. Things have gone far enough down the wrong road of well-meaning sloth. It's time for some discipline.

* * *

What was tactically impressive about Mrs. Thatcher's political and ideological rhetoric was that it was both echoed by, and echoing, voters on the doorstep. As one went polling or campaigning door-to-door with candidates in the working-class districts of London one heard voices that sounded like colloquial instant replays of the previous night's Tory campaigning seen on television. We need capital formation, said Tory eggheads; stop the hand-outs, said the voters. We need incentives, said the Tory economists; the unions are running the country, said the voters. Immigration is "swamping" us, said Mrs. Thatcher; too many coloreds, said the voters. A Tory poster says "Educashun isn't wurking;" a cab driver tells you its too bad more blokes can't go on to grammar schools instead of being herded into "comprehensive" schools. And voters and Tory politicians alike ask for "Law and Order."

Of great importance is the fact that most Labour voters one encounters are not in disagreement with these clichés and nostrums. The polls bear this out. But Labour voters, notwithstanding their views on issues still tell the pollsters, flat out, "I'm Labour." One senses this is a class judgment as much as a political or ideological one. The Tories, to many, are still nothing but Tories—the elegant, sometimes foppish, cream of English aristocracy, up to no good for the workingman.

As with other conservative parties around the democratic world, surely so in America, the Tory task is clear: to put middle-class and working-class muscle on an upper-class skeleton. An examination of poll returns indicates that Mrs. Thatcher and her followers did just that.

To do that, the Thatcherites had to fight, and win, two big battles within their own party: against the blue bloods and against the centrists.

The weight of electoral circumstances and eco-

nomic conditions provided the balance of power in those fights. The aristocrats, as ever, lost on demographics; ultimately in a one-man, one-vote society there aren't enough of them to count. And so, the party must "reach out," a phrase recently familiar to American Republicans. It takes blue bloods and blue collars. If Tories can't win with just blue bloods, Republicans here can't make it with just small town shoe store proprietors.

The Tory centrists lost out because England has been losing out. Centrist, incrementalism, is a sound and admirable doctrine for a healthy and productive society. If things are going well, changes can and should come incrementally, based on a center consensus that can be nudged this way or that, and is in fact always moving slowly on its own. But when things aren't working well—and they're not in Britain—centrism can become both a substantive mistake and a tactical blunder. Voters won't rally around tweedledee when tweedledum isn't performing well. And if elected, as the Conservatives were in 1979, tweedledee policies won't do much good. Labour, in 1979, was of course happy to point out that the Conservative record early in the decade was one of expanding government and that government expenditures rose particularly sharply under a young secretary of state for education and science named Margaret Thatcher.

So this time, the Conservatives say, they mean business. The persona of the Iron Lady says they mean business. Their manifesto—keyed to a resuscitation of an economics of enterprise and incentive—says they mean business. And they are canny (hypocritical?) enough to figure out ways to mean business without obviously "taking away" the benefits of the welfare state. In point of fact, the Tory program to sell off council houses (public housing) may be the biggest governmental giveaway program in the history of Christendom. Council housing in the United Kingdom comprises 30 percent of the housing stock. It is highly subsidized, expensive to manage, and unusually ugly. The Tories, devils that they are, propose to offer it for sale at about 50 percent of its value to the existing tenants with long-term, low interest loans!

The tenants get the boondoggle; the government gets out from under its role as a super-landlord and free enterprise lives. And everyone likes the idea except the Socialist ideologues of the Labour party who prevented it from being put in Labour's platform.

* * *

What does all this mean?

England, after all, is only a small island, not very prosperous these days. It is elegant yet despairing, beautiful yet distressed. The English are nice, friendly people. But Great Britain has half the population of Japan, less than Nigeria or Bangladesh, no more than Italy. Yet an election in any one of those countries would not cause near the interest nor impact that this one did.

The May 3 vote in England was of great international significance, and particularly to the United States. This is so for several reasons: *what* actually happened, and *where* it happened.

What happened was that there was a referendum. If that referendum had been stripped down to its raw essentials, it might well have read this way on the ballot: "Resolved: the welfare state has gone far enough." Not necessarily too far, mind you, but far enough. And the *idea* of an ever-continuing welfare state lost by a much larger margin than the election data indicate. If Englishmen were voting only on ideas and attitudes instead of on party history and personality as well, the Conservative victory would have been enormous, rather than the merely solid victory the party scored.

Coupled with this judgment on the welfare state, of lesser but not inconsequential political impact was a clear ideological shift in foreign policy. The Tories, quite simply, rejected the idea of the West in Retreat. Mrs. Thatcher's troops, psychologically battered by the loss of Empire, are now preaching that the resurgence of British grandeur can only come about if and as (a) England participates more vigorously in the Western Alliance and (b) the Western Alliance itself becomes more vigorous. That is a long cry from the accommodationist foreign policy of Labour Foreign Secretary David Owen, whose closest American political analogue seemed to be Andrew Young.

Where it happened was in England. Now England, needless to say, is not just a little elegant island in economic difficulty. True, her territorial empire is long gone. But her Empire of Emulation still lingers potently. Young intellectuals from around the world still repair to her universities. English intellectuals, journalists, and actors still emigrate and influence other cultures (pushed out, the Conservatives would maintain, by a Labour-initiated Brain Drain). English theater is a powerful artistic force in the world; so is English television. Wealthy Arabs find their hegira more often bringing them to London than to Mecca. And the world speaks English, even now unto an awakening China.

For America, all this is doubled and played out in spades. The mother country somehow still remains our standard of correctness. We worship tweeds. Other foreigners come here and speak English with "an accent"; but in our ears a British accent is heard to be only the voice of aristocracy and intelligence.

One only wonders whether the English, feeling somewhat down in the mouth these days, understand how much real clout they have left.

* * *

Now, something important is happening in the United States. Whether it is called a "move to the Right" or "neo-conservative" or whatever—there is an intellectual ferment in this country that is beginning to have major impact on our polity and our ideology, both in terms of domestic and foreign issues. This ideology is keyed to the new reality of the American circumstance,

and it both feeds upon and feeds voters' attitudes. It influences political thought and the thoughts of politicians. It is an intellectual movement of vigor and commitment—and idealism. It is gaining legitimacy with a rush.

And that, I would suggest, will be the most important impact of the English election in America: it lends added legitimacy to the Center/Right. To a nation such as ours that still worships the English, it will be impossible to view an English lady—even an Iron Lady—as a purveyor of anything but ideas that properly belong in the legitimate mainstream of democratic thought.

"Legitimacy" cannot be weighed or measured—but it is a potent force of politics. It pushes activists to double and re-double their efforts; it allows them to look their children in the eye and say, *we* are the wave of the future; it ultimately permeates the voters' consciousness as well. How seriously can a Carter or a Kennedy attack on "conservatism" be taken in 1980 if a Thatcher government—redolent in tweeds and elegant accents—has already forced a change in America's Africa policy and given America a lesson in standing up toughly in the foreign arena? Given the luck of the draw on North Sea oil, a moderately successful Thatcher government may well be seen as extremely successful by the mid-1980s, lending still further legitimacy to Thatcherism.

It is said in England that this election might be the most important since the one in 1945 when Clement Attlee beat Winston Churchill and sent England down the road to a semi-Socialist government. This election, observers say, will swing the pendulum back.

The English election of 1945, however, was not only important for England. It served to lend legitimacy to a social democratic thrust that soon enveloped the Western democracies. On balance, it was probably a beneficial global movement, re-weighting ancient social equations toward a fairer distribution of the fruits of modernism. But like all the handiwork of human beings, it was by no means perfect. Its vigor now is ebbing, its shortcomings now providing the agenda for change. In Thatcher-land and in the land of Proposition 13, folk wisdom has reached a tipping point.

It is a new moment.

* * *

The big question now is this: Even given such a popular mandate, can the Thatcherites really make changes? Naysayers argue nay. The unions are too strong, they say, people won't really accept cuts in the welfare state, the process is irreversible, ratcheting forward either quickly or slowly, but always the ratchet keeps turning, edging England even left.

There is some tactical and empirical merit to this view, although it is surely arguable. But I reject the position on theological grounds. In starkest terms it simply makes the case that voters in a democracy cannot control their own destiny. I do not believe that. ☑



by William Schneider

THE MISTRESS OF DOWNING STREET: WHY SHE WON

LONDON—The May 3rd British general election produced a substantial victory for the Conservative party and a notable victory for Britain's pollsters. The Tories swept back to government with 43.9 percent of the total popular vote, while the Labour party, with only 36.9 percent, made its worst showing since 1931. Britain's polling firms also saw their reputations restored after a sequence of embarrassing miscalls in the general elections of 1970 and 1974. The four major national polls all predicted a Conservative victory by an average margin of six points (the final Gallup, MORI, NOP, and Marplan polls averaged 45 percent for the Conservatives and 39 percent for Labour).

That much is clear. What is not so clear is what it all means. Consider:

- On the one hand, the vote for the two major parties rose from 75 percent in 1974 to 81 percent in 1979. On the other hand, the major party vote was still

appreciably lower than the 90 percent level that typically prevailed before 1974.

- On the one hand, the seven-point Conservative margin over Labour this year is larger than any margin since 1945. On the other hand, the Conservatives' percentage of the total vote was still lower than the party's 46 percent share won under Edward Heath in 1970 and the 48-50 percent shares won under Winston Churchill, Anthony Eden, and Harold Macmillan in the 1950s.

- On the one hand, the 1979 election dashed the hopes of Liberals and Nationalists to break the two-party monopoly at Westminster. On the other hand, the Liberal and Nationalist votes this year were still higher than in any postwar election before 1974.

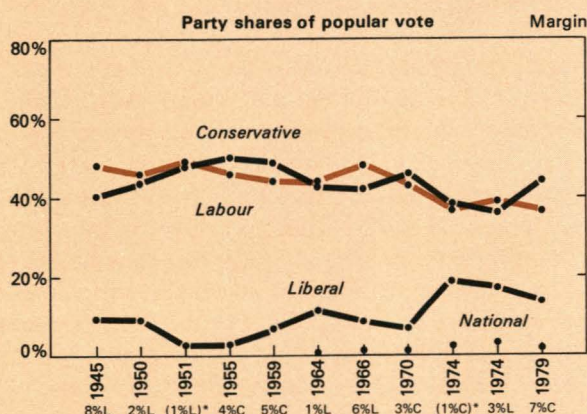
Decline of the "Antiparties"

What explains this mixed pattern of results? Let us briefly consider the case of the smaller parties and then turn to the factors behind the Tory triumph.

For most of the postwar period, the Liberal vote has been confined to the Celtic fringe of Britain—peripheral areas of Scotland, Wales, Devon, Cornwall, and various remote offshore islands. (In parts of the Orkney and Shetland constituency long represented by Jo Grimond, the nearest rail station is in Bergen, Norway.) Then suddenly in 1974, the Liberals were transformed into an antiparty protest movement. Since the Liberal party lacks a class or ideological base, it served as a perfect vehicle for expressing antipathy toward the class-divisive, confrontational politics of the two major parties. That antipathy was exceptionally high in 1974 when the Liberals scored their highest vote in more than a quarter of a century.

The problem that the Liberals faced this spring was that they had lost their purity as an "antiparty." In 1977, the Liberals entered a "Lib-Lab pact" with Labour, endorsing the Labour government and in effect keeping Labour in power for two more years. A pre-election Marplan interview in twelve Liberal constituencies found that among Liberal voters who planned to change their votes this spring, the reasons most often cited were that "to vote Liberal is a wasted vote" (26 percent) and the "Lib-Lab pact" (25 percent). Election

Figure 1
PARTY SHARES OF POPULAR VOTE



On May 3, 1979, the British people voted for a change. The Tories captured 43.9 percent of the popular vote. Labour, with only 36.9 percent, made its worst showing since 1931. As this figure shows, however, elections in Britain have been relatively close in recent years.

For the Conservatives, the seven-point margin of victory was larger than any margin since 1945. Their percentage of the total vote, however, is still lower than the party's 46 percent share won under Ted Heath in 1970. For the Liberals and for the Nationalists there has been some backsliding, although their share of the vote is still higher than in any postwar election before 1974.

day surveys indicated that nearly half of the Liberals' 1974 supporters defected this year, mostly to the Conservatives. (A "Thorpe effect" may have also cost the Liberals precious votes. The greatest swing against the Liberals this year was in and around the constituency represented by Mr. Jeremy Thorpe, the former Liberal leader now on trial for conspiracy to commit murder.)

The Nationalists declined this year for much the same reason as the Liberals: their basic appeal was discredited. In 1974, the Nationalists shared the antiparty protest with the Liberals. Most Nationalist voters in 1974 did not actually favor Scottish or Welsh independence. Contrary to popular conceptions, it was the low esteem of the major parties that precipitated the surge of nationalism five years ago—not the reverse. The results of the Scottish and Welsh referenda this March revealed just how limited the appeal of true nationalism is in both regions. In the general election, it was difficult for Scottish and Welsh voters to take seriously the same parties that had failed to obtain even a modest version of their objectives just two months earlier at the polls.

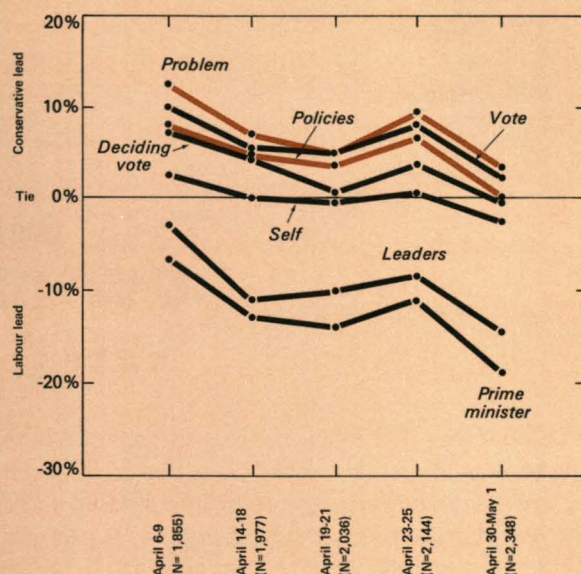
Why the Thatcherites Won

For the Tories, the five-week campaign almost turned into a chilling cliff-hanger. Gallup's vote-intention survey gave the Conservatives a ten-point lead at the beginning of the campaign, but that dwindled to only two points in Gallup's final poll. Other surveys showed a Tory lead as high as twenty-one points at the outset falling by two-thirds by the day of the election. Interestingly, it was the Liberals, not Labour, who seemed to pick up votes as the Conservative margin diminished.

Why did the Tories prevail in the end? That, of course, is a question that will be vigorously debated on both sides of the Atlantic. Figure 2, which tracks Gallup surveys over the course of the campaign, provides several helpful clues. It shows that the Tories' strongest advantage throughout the campaign was in the area of policy. The Conservatives were consistently ranked above Labour as the party best able to handle the most important problems facing the country and as the party with "the best policies." Labour, on the other hand, held a strong, sustained advantage in the area of leadership, and Mr. Callaghan himself was consistently preferred as prime minister over Mrs. Thatcher.

As can be seen in Figure 2, vote intention in Britain was always much closer to policy preference than to leadership preference. Yet if the Conservatives won on "policies," it is still not clear whether voters were attracted to the new laissez-faire individualism of the Tory party or repelled by the policy failures of the Labour government—or both. In leaving office, Mr. Callaghan remarked that Labour lost because people "voted against last winter," that is, the wave of strikes and disruptions in public services carried out by trade unions in defiance of the government's policy of wage restraint. But Sir Harold Wilson, Mr. Callaghan's prede-

Figure 2



	KEY	Average Lead
Problem	"What would you say is the most urgent problem facing the country at the present time? Which party can best handle that problem?"	7.5% CON
Vote	"If you voted, which party would you support?" ("Don't knows" excluded)	6% CON
Policies	"Taking everything into account, which party has the best policies?"	4.5% CON
Deciding Vote	"If your vote decided whether we had a Labour government under Mr. Callaghan or a Conservative government under Mrs. Thatcher, which would you give it to?"	3.5% CON
Self	"Leaving on one side the question of which party you support, which party is best for people like yourself?"	0 TIE
Leaders	"Taking everything into account, which party has the best leaders?"	9.5% LAB
Prime Minister	"Who would make the better Prime Minister, Mr. Callaghan, Mrs. Thatcher, or Mr. Steel?"	13% LAB

Source: Gallup Poll, Ltd.

cessor as prime minister and leader of the Labour party, said on election night that the voters were rebelling against "taxation and government expenditure."

Various polls taken during the campaign asked voters to name or choose the most important problems facing Britain. In every case, "prices" or "the cost of living" ranked first, usually by a substantial margin. The other problems that appeared recurrently were unemployment, strikes and industrial relations, taxation, and "law and order." Respondents were also asked to indicate which party was best qualified to handle each problem. Interestingly, Labour tended to be rated equal to or better than the Conservatives on the two principal economic issues, prices and unemployment. For instance, in a late April poll taken by Market & Opinion Research International (MORI), the two major parties were selected by about equal numbers of voters as having the best policies to deal with prices (Conservatives 40 percent, Labour 39 percent) and unemployment (Conservatives 39 percent, Labour 37 percent). In the

BBC/Gallup election day poll, among respondents who named prices as the most important issue, Labour was considered better able to handle this problem than the Conservatives by a thirteen-point margin. Those who considered unemployment the most important issue chose Labour to handle that problem over the Conservatives by a margin of fifteen points.

The Tory Protest Vote

The Conservatives won their support not on inflation and unemployment but on what might be called *protest* issues—taxation, trade union power, and “law and order.” In the BBC/Gallup election day poll, the Conservatives led Labour by fifteen points as the party best able to handle strikes, by sixty-one points as the party best able to handle taxes, and by seventy-two points as the party best able to handle “law and order”—in each case, among respondents who considered that problem the most important one facing the country. In the ITN/ORC election day poll, respondents were asked, “Which one of these issues do you think the next government should make top priority in its programme?” While Conservative voters were less likely than Labour and Liberal voters to select prices or unemployment, they were more likely to select taxation, “law and order,” and “trade unions.”

The protest quality of the Conservative swing is demonstrated in still another way by the ITN/ORC election day poll. Respondents were asked to select a reason why they chose the party they had just voted for. Conservative switchers—those who had voted for some other party in October 1974 but were now voting Conservative—were disproportionately likely to select as their reason, “I had reservations about the party I usually vote for.”

To be sure, the 1979 Conservative platform offered a sweeping attack on welfare-state socialism. Its proposals included income tax cuts with attendant increases in indirect taxation, an end to government subsidies for declining industries, reform of coercive and undemocratic trade union practices, reductions in social welfare expenditure, and rejection of wage-and-price controls in favor of free collective bargaining and free-market competition. Many of these proposals were popular. A Marplan poll dated April 18-19 showed strong agreement by voters of all stripes with the following proposals: “replacing a lot of income tax by higher taxes on expenditure; that is, by more tax on what you buy and less on what you earn” (70 percent approval); “a ban on paying social security benefits to strikers unless there’s been a postal ballot” (77 percent approval); “capital punishment for all terrorist murderers” (83 percent approval). An NOP poll taken on April 2-3 found popular majorities in favor of “heavier sentences for violence and vandalism” (53-3 percent); “compulsory secret ballots of union members before strike action” (81-8 percent); “bringing back grammar schools [schools for the academically talented]” (60-21 per-

cent); “abolishing trade union closed shops” (60-19 percent); and “encouraging more private medicine alongside the Health Service” (51-33 percent). Between two-thirds and three-quarters of the respondents perceived the Conservative party as more likely to favor each of these policies. Still, it is not clear that British voters endorsed a frontal assault on the welfare state. Seventy-seven percent of the Marplan respondents approved of “more government expenditure on creating jobs for the unemployed.” “Government overspending” was one of the issues on a list of ten shown to these same respondents, who were then asked, “Which one of these issues is most important to you in deciding how to vote in the general election on May 3rd?” Precisely 4 percent selected “government overspending.”

The Tory protest vote seems to have been directed at the monopoly power, social irresponsibility, and extremism of the trade unions and their supporters in the Labour party. Labour had been elected—narrowly—in 1974 in the hope that they could handle the unions better than Edward Heath. Heath’s policies had been divisive and confrontational, whereas Labour promised conciliation. And conciliation, in the form of a “social contract” between the government and the unions, seemed to work for a while. In September 1978, when Prime Minister Callaghan was expected to call an election, it was widely thought that he might win. But Callaghan made the mistake of pushing his luck. The “social contract” broke down in the months that followed. The government’s 5 percent limit on wage increases was rejected first by the Trades Union Congress and then by the national conference of the Labour party itself. Truck drivers and public employee unions went out on strike and were supported by secondary picketing from other unions. The result was massive disruptions in essential services. The “mounting chaos,” which the prime minister refused to recognize, made a mockery of Labour’s claim to be able to control the unions. Eventually, on March 28, the Labour government lost a vote of confidence in the House of Commons—one of only two British governments in this century to be forced out of office.

The “winter of discontent” also threw into doubt Labour’s ability to control inflation. The socialist approach to inflation has been limited to one form or another of wage-and-price controls—a “strong government” policy that has proved unworkable under a succession of Labour and Tory governments. The Tories have now proposed a “weak government” approach to inflation, inspired, perhaps, by the tax revolt in the United States.

As a rule, British voters have a much more positive attitude toward government than do Americans. The British are more likely to see government as a protective and beneficent force. A December 1978 national poll of Americans taken by the *Los Angeles Times* asked, “Would you rather have more government services if that meant more taxes, less government services

in order to reduce taxes, or services and taxes about as we have them now?" Two out of three Americans chose less government services and lower taxes. In the BBC/Gallup election day poll in Britain, respondents were asked whether they preferred lower taxes or the keeping-up of government services. Seventy percent, including majorities in all parties, preferred the keeping-up of government services.

Not only is the British attitude toward government more positive than that of Americans, but strong government has been the dominant tradition of both major parties. The Labour party is, of course, explicitly socialist. But traditionally the Conservative party has also looked upon government as a paternalistic and protective institution. Indeed, the Conservatives spent most of the nineteenth century opposing the "radical"

laissez-faire individualism of the Liberal party. It is the liberal tradition in Britain, as in the rest of Europe, that is individualistic and antigovernment.

In this sense, Mrs. Thatcher's policies challenge the dominant philosophy of her own party. Her reliance on free-market incentives and competition—"neoliberalism," as it is properly labeled in the British context—represents a new departure in British politics. It cannot fairly be said that the British electorate resoundingly endorsed her economic philosophy on May 3rd. But it can be said that the voters rebelled against the failure of the Labour party's alternative. Thus, the crucial time for Mrs. Thatcher to make her case for the new Tory philosophy was not during the five-week election campaign; it comes now, as the five years of Tory rule begin. □

Between the October 1974 and May 1979 elections, the Conservatives in Britain made significant gains among a number of social categories. The figures below show the "swing" in various social categories between the October 1974 and May 1979 elections. "Swing" is conventionally defined as the average of the Conservative gain and the Labour loss. Thus the nationwide swing was 5.2 percent to the Conservatives, an average of the Conservatives' gain of 8.1 percent and Labour's loss of 2.3 percent.

The breakdown by social class reveals a stronger swing to the Tories among working-class voters than among middle-class voters. The upper middle class (professionals and managers who comprise 13 percent of the electorate) hardly changed at all from their solid Conservative position. It was among skilled workers that the Tories made their most notable gains. This category—which represents about one-third of the British electorate—voted Labour by a twenty-three-point margin in October 1974 (49 percent Labour to 26 percent Conservative). This year, the two major parties were virtually tied among skilled workers: 45 percent Labour to 44 percent Conservative.

Many observers have noted an especially high swing to the Tories in constituencies with high concentrations of automobile workers. One interpretation is that these skilled workers resented the "leveling" policies of the Labour government which attempted to apply sanctions against the Ford Motor Company last winter for granting its workers a 17 percent pay increase. Such policies may have stimulated automobile and other workers to vote Tory in order to restore traditional wage differentials on the basis of skill. The heavy Tory vote among skilled workers is certain to provoke controversy within the Labour party as it goes into opposition.

The figures also show a stronger swing to the Tories among men than among women—a particularly anomalous result, given the fact that a woman was leading the Tory party. In 1974, female voters were 7 percent more Conservative than male voters. In 1979, the two sexes voted almost exactly the same.

The swing in age categories also shows some interesting results. Although there was almost no change among voters over sixty-five, there was a strong swing to the Tories among the young. In May 1979, the two major parties were virtually tied among eighteen-to-twenty-two year olds, 40 percent Conservative to 39 percent Labour. The 1974 figures showed Conservatives ahead of Labour only among voters over sixty-five. In 1979, the Conservatives led Labour in all age groups.

The Conservatives seem to have made their greatest gains this year among voters who had previously been mostly pro-Labour—skilled workers, men, and the young. Whether the Conservatives can hold these groups, or whether the party was the recipient of a protest vote in the 1979 election, remains to be seen.

These figures also indicate a general decline in social polarization in the 1979 election. With the most pro-Labour groups swinging disproportionately to the Conservatives, differences by class, sex, and age tended to be lower in 1979 than they had been in 1974. This effect is especially marked in the case of age. The difference in Conservative support between the oldest and the youngest voters had been 25 percent in October 1974. In May 1979, the oldest voters were only 10 percent more Conservative than the youngest voters. There is no evidence here that the Thatcher election was polarizing. In social terms, the effect was just the reverse.

Figure 3a

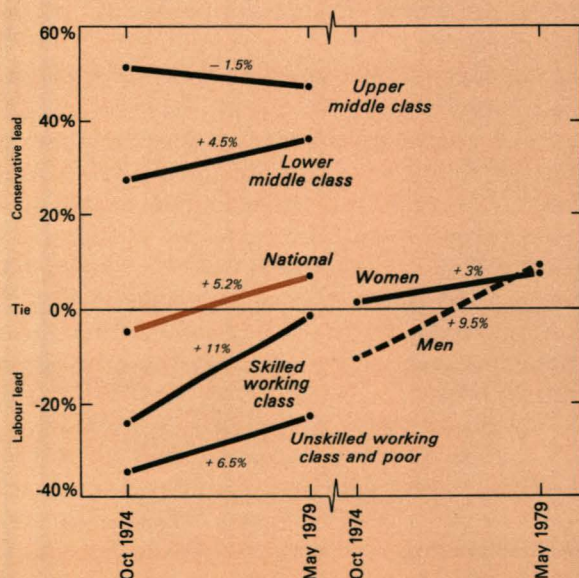
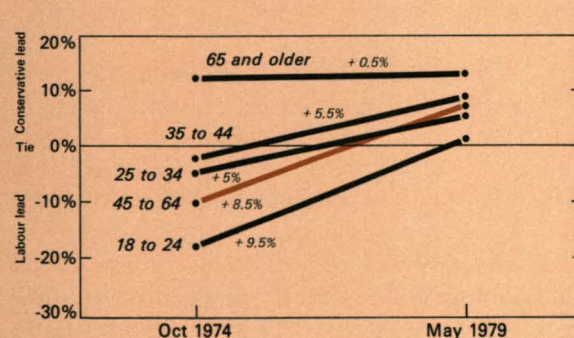


Figure 3b



Source: 1974—David Butler and Dennis Kavanagh, *The British General Election of October 1974* (Macmillan, 1975), p. 278, Table 1 (Louis Harris data). 1979—"Who Swung Tory?" *The Economist* (May 12, 1979), p. 26, Tables 3 and 4 (BBC/Gallup data).

(Continued from page 6.)

that makes demographic or economic growth of any kind an evil. Only through economic growth, obviously, was it possible for the early suburbanites to reach their cherished Marin County in California or Scarsdale in New York. Further economic growth would, however, threaten these suburbs with newcomers: not only the minorities and the poor, but, much more imminently, other members of the middle-class.

"Earlier," writes Professor Frieden, "the goal was exclusion—keeping out people of lower status. Now the goal is freezing growth—keeping out everybody in order to hold on to what you have. Policies that freeze growth are a threat to families outside the suburbs who want to get in, but outsiders can do very little about these policies."

Professor Frieden also writes:

"The talk of survival, limited resources and austerity does not crimp the life-style of suburban 'environmentalists,' but only of the people they keep outside. In attempting to justify its position on growth, [environmentalism] has begun to spread a new ideology of elitism through the country's political life."

In Marin County, for example, the residents reached the decision to stop growth after only 7 percent of the land had been developed for housing. They then managed to get the federal government to buy large areas of the coast for "recreation areas." But, this accomplished, the next and final step was to have these areas ruled to be "ecosystems" which were too fragile for any considerable numbers of those wishing recreation, the final result being, of course, restriction of these areas to the families who got to Marin County first. Rarely if ever, Frieden points out, are the inhabitants of the Marin Counties of America willing to cover costs of restriction (read "protection") themselves. Almost always some agency of government is persuaded through quiet pressure to pay, either directly or through expansion of tax benefits.

Need we ask whether these "new elitists" are opposed to nuclear reactor plants—anywhere? The answer is too obvious. With coal and oil reserves diminishing, nuclear energy has to be perceived as the long-run enemy to all visions of no-growth Elysium. It isn't a matter of having nuclear reactor plants kept out of Marin County; they must be kept out of the entire country, for no matter where they exist, they promote the dreaded, hated growth of industry and the consequent rise of minorities and the poor to the point where they may come knocking at the door.

Nearly four years ago, Norman Macrae, deputy editor of *The Economist*, after a long tour through the United States, wrote, in a masterful supplement titled "America's Third Century" that one of America's principal dangers—to itself and to the rest of the world—is its adoption of the same kind of snobbism regarding

business and industrial production that, Macrae points out, had helped cut off English economic growth in the last quarter of the 19th century.

"The main reason for Britain's entrepreneurial decay around 1876 was that a century's experience as top dog had by then become debilitating. . . . As each new technological development appeared in the late 19th century there were interests in Britain . . . who had prospered from the development which it would replace, so they united to wish that the new idea would please go away."

If, Macrae continues, opposition to economic growth, to the acceptance of new and vital forms of energy making growth possible, were simply the result of selfishness, of economic avarice, one might shrug, saying it has always been thus. Unhappily (for growth and the rise of the poor and the minorities) it is the very opposite of what used to be called "naked self-interest" that is the primary factor—in a word, it is *idealism*. It is "eco-idealism" that masks a Marin County's desire to repulse fresh inhabitants. And, writes Macrae, "On campuses across the continent, a peculiarly innumerate anti-growth cult is being taught to a generation of idealistic kids as if it was high moral philosophy, even a religion." Very aptly indeed does Macrae quote G. K. Chesterton: "There is nothing the matter with Americans except their ideals. The real American is all right; it is the ideal American who is all wrong."

We appear to be living in yet another age in which "failure of nerve" is conspicuous; not in the minds of America's majority but in the minds of those who are gatekeepers for ideas, the intellectuals. The world is governed by ideas, good and bad, and those in whose hands control of diffusion of ideas falls—however small in number they may be relative to the total population—cannot help but wield enormous power. At the end of his essays on "America's Third Century," Norman Macrae wrote:

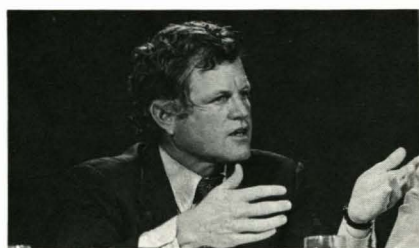
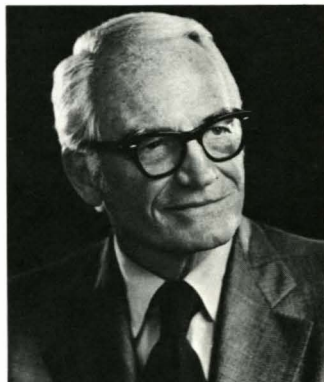
"There are three main questions. First, will America continue to believe in economic growth? Half the world will remain hungry if it does not, and that half-world may blow us up.

"Second, should America believe in participatory producers' democracy in factory and politics, or in extended and informed consumers' freedom in both? Please God, it should believe in consumers' freedom.

"Third, does the star-spangled banner still wave o'er the land of the free, and the home of the brave? The stars glitter but no wise foreigner at this hour will rely wholly on George Washington's order of April 1777: 'Put none but Americans on guard tonight'."

Such is the power exerted by intellectuals in our modern society and such is the pass America has been brought to by the media and its consecrated dissemination to the multitude of countereconomic, counterpolitical and countercultural ideas. As Arthur Guiterman prayed many years ago, may God continue to look out for fools, drunks—and the United States of America. ☐

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(Continued from page 19.)

course but to fight it out on the issue, which has led to a cycle of mounting recrimination and hostility.

From my own experience while at the Gallup Organization, I can report that public opinion surveys, drawing upon the techniques of marketing research, can in fact provide a way out of the quandary. Consider our 1974 study of a middle-sized city in the Plains states. In that study, interviewers asked whites and blacks within the city their reactions to four possible integration plans: learning resource centers, magnet junior and senior high schools, clustering, and redistricting of high schools. The magnet concept was the only one to be approved by a majority of both whites (64 percent) and blacks (65 percent). (See Table 1.) While the learning resource centers won the approval of 72 percent of blacks, barely half (49 percent) of the whites endorsed that plan. The redistricting and clustering proposals were the least favorably received, with each one acceptable to half the blacks and only a minority of whites.

The reasons given for endorsing each plan are revealing. (See Tables 2 and 3.) Among both whites and blacks, the most frequently mentioned reasons for preferring the two most acceptable plans, magnet schools and learning resource centers, related primarily to their *educational* value. In contrast, to the extent that redistricting and clustering were liked, it was because they promote integration and racial tolerance. In other words, public support for the most favored plans was based on parental interest in quality education. The fact that magnet schools would also involve bus trans-

portation did not deter most parents. Furthermore, the poll shows that among blacks, quality education at an integrated school is far more appealing than integration per se.

Another significant survey result was that 78 percent of the whites said they would not object if their children attended a school that was half black. Even if one allows for the possibility that this response exaggerated the favorableness of white attitudes, it does indicate that most whites in this community had accepted the principle of school integration. At the same time, however, they apparently saw little educational value for their children in integration as such, a point of disagreement with blacks. (See Table 4.) That finding underscores the significance of educational benefits to whites as a reason for preferring magnet schools.

Table 4

The questions: What advantages can you see for your children in attending an integrated school? And what would concern you regarding your child attending an integrated school?

	Whites (percent)	Blacks (percent)
Most Frequently Named Advantages		
Intergroup relations:		
Learn racial tolerance	43	18
Learn to live in a heterogeneous society	26	17
Education:		
More rounded education	5	1
Get better education	—	27
Most Frequently Named Concerns		
Child's well being:		
Personal safety	37	9
Social maladjustment	—	13
Unfair treatment	—	14
Education:		
Quality of education	16	19
School discipline	6	*
Busing, Transportation	8	6

Table 2
MOST FREQUENTLY CITED REASONS FOR APPROVING EACH PLAN AMONG WHITES

Magnet Schools (64% approve)
16% Not forced, offers a choice
15% Likes the opportunity to specialize
15% Career and vocational orientation
10% Provides top education in field of interest
Learning Resource Center (49% approve)
20% Broadens education, offers special courses
10% Promotes racial tolerance, integration
Redistricting (26% approve)
10% Promotes racial tolerance, integration
6% Children would stay in one school
5% Would require limited busing only
Clustering (32% approve)
10% Promotes racial tolerance, integration
6% Would require limited busing only

Table 3
MOST FREQUENTLY CITED REASONS FOR APPROVING EACH PLAN AMONG BLACKS

Learning Resource Center (72% approve)
26% Broadens education, offers special courses
14% Promotes racial tolerance, integration
Magnet Schools (65% approve)
22% Career and educational orientation
9% Likes the opportunity to specialize
8% Provides top education in field of interest
Redistricting (49% approve)
16% Promotes racial tolerance, integration
8% Promotes equal education
Clustering (50% approve)
17% Promotes racial tolerance, integration
14% Likes grouping by age of children

The poll also dealt with the issue of school discipline and physical safety by asking what effect each plan would have on "student safety and well being." (See Table 5.) The magnet schools were the only ones that whites did not think would worsen conditions. Similarly, blacks felt that magnet schools and learning resource centers would improve conditions. In both groups, therefore, expectations regarding safety were clearly associated with approval.

Table 5

The questions: What effect do you think (PLAN) would have on: Quality of education? Student safety and well being?

	Beliefs Concerning Effect of Each Plan on:			
	Quality of Education		Student Safety and Well Being	
	Make Better (percent)	Make Worse (percent)	Make Better (percent)	Make Worse (percent)
Whites				
Magnet Schools	63	11	22	28
Learning Resource Center	49	17	16	40
Redistricting	19	34	11	42
Clustering	19	36	13	46
Blacks				
Magnet Schools	63	12	40	9
Learning Resource Center	71	9	44	10
Redistricting	36	33	24	32
Clustering	42	28	30	21

These expressions of public opinion by themselves are, of course, an insufficient base for developing school integration plans. They do suggest, however, that in order for a school busing plan to be acceptable to a majority of whites, it must meet two conditions: there must be evidence of educational benefits to whites, and there must be assurances that school discipline will be enforced and students' safety protected. Furthermore, it is exactly this combination of quality education, school discipline, and physical safety that is of the highest concern to blacks. (While it is unlikely that any single formula can be applied successfully throughout the nation, another survey, conducted in 1973 in a city in the Deep South, points to the same conclusions.)

Whether magnet schools can actually meet these criteria is, of course, beyond the scope of opinion polls. But the polls do help to establish the criteria that experts can more intelligently apply in designing an integration program. If a program were developed that met these criteria, the possibility of gaining community acceptance would appear to be high. Conversely, if the plan fell below these standards, the odds are that the integration program would be rejected by most whites and even by significant numbers of blacks. This, of course, is what has happened with busing. Regrettably, past experience with busing has led many to conclude that school integration must remain an unrealistic ideal. It is not integration, however, that most of the public is unwilling to accept but a specific means of achieving it.

Conclusions

Obviously, public opinion polls by themselves cannot assure effective programs and wise policy decisions, nor can they pretend to substitute for the legislative process. To the extent that they are integrated into governmental research programs, however, two kinds of benefits can be anticipated. First, government programs are more likely to conform to the needs of the public and be compatible with the real life experiences of individuals. As a result, the programs that are carried out are likely to have a higher rate of success, while unwanted and unworkable programs are less likely to be attempted. Second, and perhaps of even greater significance, the increased responsiveness to the public that would occur in the executive agencies should help to reduce public alienation from what is now perceived by many to be an elitist technocracy.

If public opinion polls are to perform these dual functions, it is important that they not be treated as plebiscites. Plebiscitarian "democracy" is but a step away from totalitarianism. Instead of single-minded reporting that "the public"—or a majority of the public—holds a given view, sophisticated analysis of poll data involves the comparison and contrasting of views held by different segments of the public. Such analysis can identify areas of compatibility and perhaps even congruence. And when needs and wants are diverse,

as is often the case, it can help to target alternative programs to appropriate segments of the public.

Similarly, polls would provide poor guidance to policy makers and program designers if they were conducted *solely* to measure the *extent* of public approval of particular concepts or ideas. Opinions are never fixed but change in response to new experiences and events. That is why polls taken before an event often prove to be unreliable indicators of eventual public reaction. What is crucial is not the proportion approving a concept at any given moment but *reasons underlying* approval or opposition. When underlying motivations and attitudes are identified, policies and programs can be shaped to meet long-term public aspirations and wants.

It should also be noted that greater reliance upon public opinion surveys does not mean a total rejection of expert opinion. To ignore the knowledge acquired by the experts through years of study and research would be patently foolish. Nonetheless, though the layman may lack a sophisticated understanding of why the world works as it does, his "gut reactions" can be a solid guide for intelligent policy making. Even more important, however, is the commitment to the proposition of government *by* the people—the idea that, indeed, government derives its authority from the people. If we are so committed, then we are by definition committed to increasing, not limiting, public participation in how our government is run. Public opinion polls provide an important means for achieving this increase.

It should also be noted that greater reliance upon opinion polls does not require the abdication of democratic leadership responsibilities. Such leadership entails both responsiveness *and* responsibility for administrators as well as elected officeholders. Public opinion polls, if properly used, can help executive agencies be more responsive without curtailing their responsibility. By accepting public opinion as a guide during the formative stages of program development, policy makers and administrators would forthrightly face the challenge to creative leadership that is inherent in democratic government.

Our major corporations have learned that the marketplace imposes limits on their ability to sell products. Consumers do select and choose, rejecting an Edsel and buying a Mustang, depending upon how well the product meets their needs and desires. By incorporating the methods of opinion and attitude research—many of which were initially developed by pollsters—into their marketing activities, corporations have learned how to be more responsive to the marketplace. Those companies that have done this creatively have clearly benefited, both in profitability and public stature. By the same measure, the integration of opinion research into policy research can create a direct link between executive agencies and the public. By becoming more responsive, government can also become more effective—and ultimately, more democratic. ☒

Collector's Items

By David Gergen

The Thirteenth Stroke—Tucked away in the last issue of this magazine, among a number of polls measuring public attitudes toward SALT, was one survey that apparently startled several readers.

It was taken by CBS News/*New York Times* and showed that only 23 percent of those interviewed could correctly identify the two countries participating in the SALT negotiations—and this after seven long years at the bargaining table.

To dismayed readers, that finding was like the 13th stroke of a clock: it called into question all the other strokes that had gone before. If so few people even know who the players are, how can they comment intelligently upon the game, much less the score?

For survey researchers, that is an old, familiar question. Bernard Roshco, former editor of *Public Opinion Quarterly* and now senior public opinion analyst for the State Department, believes that the SALT polls are a classic example of opinion that has not yet crystallized. "On some issues, of course, the public never has an opinion. But on questions like SALT, opinion often follows a 'career' path. In its early career—and that's where SALT appears to be now—opinion is rough and ill-formed. But when the issue begins to dominate the headlines and evening news, opinion reaches a more mature stage in its career and we can understand it more fully. Opinion on SALT will probably begin to mature when the text is released and the press begins to take a stand."

Assuming that Roshco is right—and he is well respected in his field—there remains the more difficult problem that on some key policy issues, the public never seems to have a firm grasp. In 1964, for example, some 62 percent of Americans surveyed thought the Soviet Union was a member of NATO; at nearly the same time, only a quarter realized that mainland China was under communist rule. More recently, a poll has shown that 33 percent can't recall when the U.S. had wage and price con-

trols, and 21 percent can't remember them at all. Why, then, should policy makers pay any attention to the polls?

Hamiltonians have argued that they shouldn't; republican government, in their view, demands independent reflection by those in power, not "unqualified compliance to every sudden breeze of passion. . . ."

But a more persuasive view, at least to me, is that expressed by the late Harwood Childs of Princeton and reprinted in a recent book by Charles W. Roll, Jr. and Albert H. Cantril, *Polls, Their Use and Misuse in Politics*: ". . . the general public is especially competent, probably more competent than any other group—elitist, expert, or otherwise—to determine the basic ends of public policy. . . . On the other hand, the general public is not competent to determine the best means for attaining specific goals, to answer technical questions, to prescribe remedies for political, social, and economic ills, and to deal with specialized issues far removed from the everyday experience and understanding of the people in general."

Senators, please take note. ☒

The Peter Poll—For those who feel surfeited by the "most admired" polls, Dr. Laurence J. Peter provides welcome relief: the third annual poll identifying those who best exemplify the Peter Principle that everyone rises to his or her own level of incompetence.

Some 1,200 readers of *Human Behavior* magazine responded to the latest 1978 survey uncrowning the previous winner, Anita Bryant. The new champ, says Dr. Peter, is President Carter, whose recent tutelage by Gerald R. Ford propelled him upward from a second place finish a year earlier.

Dr. Peter notes with puzzlement that five of those on his top twenty list also appeared on the "most admired" poll taken by the *National Enquirer*. "I have been told that the polls don't lie so I must accept that Richard Nixon, Gerald Ford, Anita Bryant, Billy Graham, and Jimmy Carter are five of 1978's most admired incompetents." ☒

Preparing for Munich? Senator William Proxmire, ever watchful of government waste, showered his criticisms this spring upon the U.S. Air Force—and not without good reason.

The Air Force Uniform Board, it seems, was faced with one of those momentous decisions whether men in uniform should carry umbrellas. Unable to reach a command decision, the board fell for one of those nostrums that is becoming more popular these days: don't just stand there, take a poll.

So, on March 1, 1979, four pages of questions and a computer survey answer sheet went out to 1,700 men (along, of course, with a Privacy Act statement). What, the board demanded to know, will umbrellas do to Air Force masculinity? Should there be freedom of choice? And even more important, will an umbrella interfere with the act of saluting? As long as the right hand doesn't know what the left is doing, one could see that would be rather sticky.

Senator Proxmire promptly ordered up a Golden Fleece for the occasion, but the Air Force is plowing ahead. One wonders whether somewhere in the Pentagon, a GS-12 is also drawing up plans for a bumbershoot brigade, waiting for the country's next retreat. ☒

Skirt Gazing—Last winter, we printed a sketch from a Desmond Morris book showing that over the past half century, the hemline of women's skirts has been a rather accurate guide to the economy. When skirt lengths go up, good times are ahead; but when they go down, watch out for a slump.

With so much uncertainty now in the air, this has naturally been a good time to take an informal survey, and one can't help but notice how many skirts are now appearing that drop well below the knee . . . but then have a roaring slit up the side. What would Desmond Morris make of that? Obviously, there is only one answer: we're heading into a peak-a-boo recession. ☒

IN COMING ISSUE
Ralph Nader vs. Herman Kahn
A Conversation on:
Nuclear Power
Taxes
Third-Party Movements
The Nature of Progress

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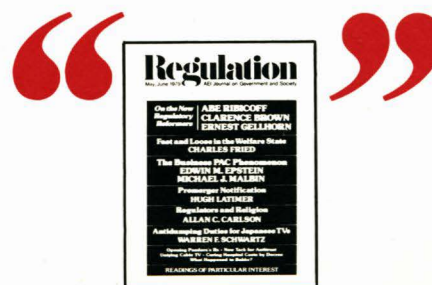
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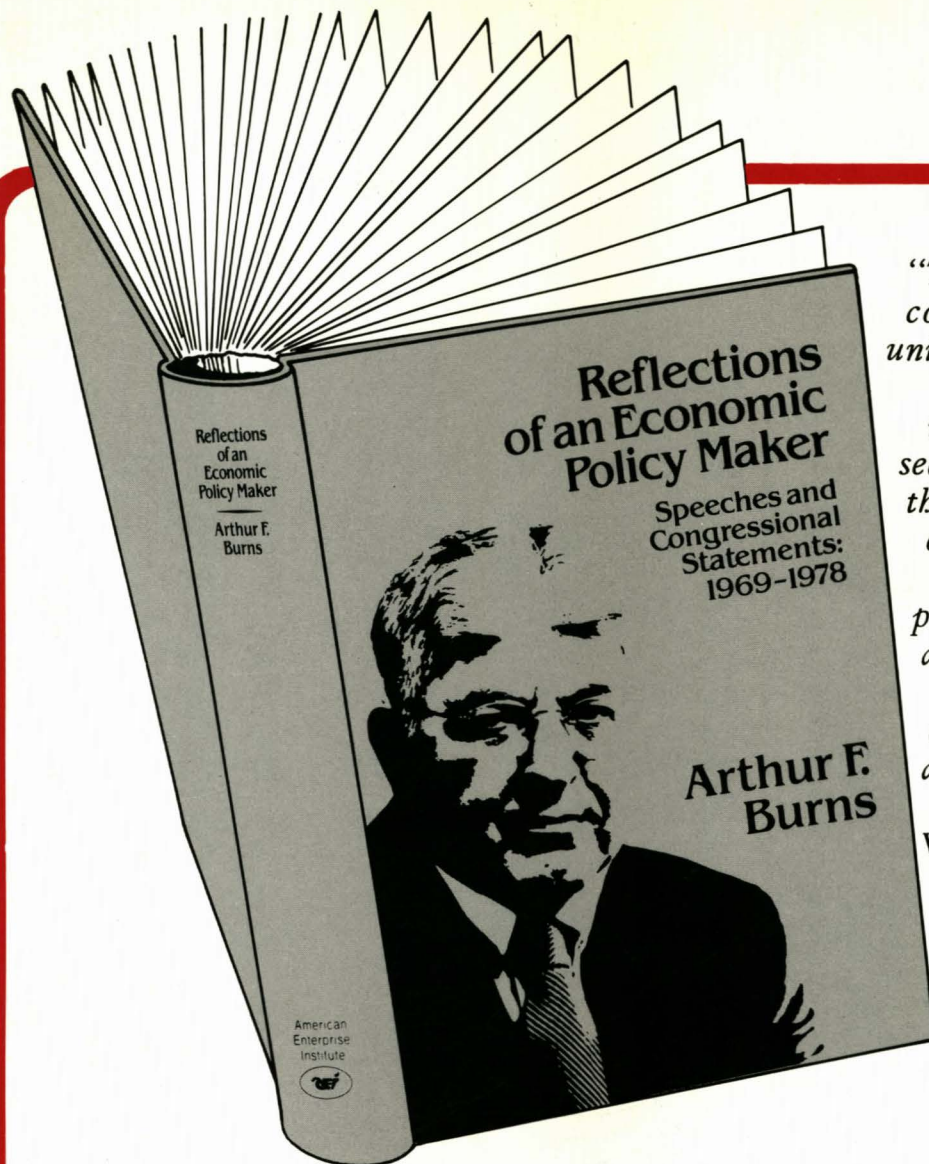
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